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PATHWAYS TO THE BEST

PATHWAYS TO THE BEST

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By

CHARLES L. GOODELL, D.D.

Pastor of Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church, New York, Author of "My Mother's Bible," "Pastoral Evangelism," etc.

INTRODUCTION BY

BISHOP CHARLES HENRY FOWLER

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TO MARY—MY WIFE

INTRODUCTION

BY BISHOP CHARLES HENRY FOWLER

THERE is no grander conception of life than that we are sent here on an errand. When we remember that the errand is entrusted to us by the Supreme Authority of the Universe it exalts our mission beyond conception. It adds to our dignity and consequence that we are entrusted by the Almighty with something that He wishes to communicate or do in the world, that takes us in a kind of copartnership with Him. Life ceases to be trivial. It remains for us to find the object for which God has sent us into the world.

To determine what our errand is we must put into the account all our being. This evidently centers our work in our immortality, and as we struggle to picture to ourselves somewhat of immortality we will begin to realize the vast import of our errand. Most men seem to have belittled their being by giving their undi-

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vided attention to unimportant matters. It is hard for us to believe that an immortal, wound up never to run down, that will only find the morning of his being long after the sun has burned down in his socket and gone out, will find the end of his existence—the purpose for which he is making a journey through the world—to be the foolish amusements and trifling toys of the hour. When we come into contact with beings like ourselves there must be something in our relations to them and to the great future that determines our mission.

When we remember that the Great Teacher spent His time toiling at the great problem of our destiny, and so toiling that He finally surrendered His life to secure that destiny for us, we may be sure that our work must be kindred to His and that on our "Pathways to the Best" we are called upon to make up that which was behind His sufferings. From this standpoint the sermons of Brother Goodell are naturally poised on the question of bringing men to their proper relations with God and the great work of the world's re-

demption. If we get from the book a single additional ray of light upon this problem, it will more than pay for its publication and for its perusal. It is something to get a book that shows us one standing on a summit pointing out the "Pathways to the Best," that our attention may be turned that way. Let us look and learn.

PREFACE

THE sermon is a means, not an end. It is of value not in proportion as it meets the requirements of homiletic rules, but in proportion as it meets the spiritual requirements of those who hear it. The sermon should have both a subject and an object. The closer the relation between them the better, but if one or the other must be sacrificed let it not be the object. Throughout the author's ministry these principles have actuated him in all his pulpit work, and by them this modest volume is to be judged. He is aware that a part of what is printed here may more properly be called sermon notes than sermons. As a matter of fact, they were delivered extempore, and are reproduced here in outline at the earnest request of those who heard them and desired to have them in permanent form.

In these sermons the didactic has been given a secondary place not because the author would discount the teaching function of the pulpit, but his experience has convinced him that the great duty of the pulpit is to move men to act up to the

knowledge and light which they already possess. The need of the hour seems to be not so much more light as more sight. If a sermon sends men and women to the duties of life inspired to be true to every holy purpose it is a good sermon, no matter what the critics may say.

If these sermons seem to be direct and intense, it is because they mirror the feelings of the preacher in their composition and delivery; if there is in them a heart message, it is because they bear the stamp of the yearning which prompted them. The author has absolutely no question as to the great essentials of the Christian life, and he can speak with all the force of a conviction that masters his soul. He is certain that these matters are not academic, for he has found their settlement in the great verities of Christian experience.

It is through such preaching that God has honored his ministry with whatever of success has attended it. May the Spirit follow every worthy thought herein exprest and give it power in the wider field to which it is now sent.

Calvary Parsonage,
New York City.

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I

THE THINGS OF FAITH

I

THROUGH DEED TO CREED

If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine.—JOHN xvii. 7.

IF ours is an age of doubt, there is great reason that we listen to the message of Jesus, for He has a short and effective method with doubters. There are many kinds of doubt in the world, while much that goes by the name of doubt is simply indifference. Jesus has a method for each case, and it will not take the careful thinker long to discern to which class he belongs. Some one has said that the coat-of-arms of the twentieth century is an interrogation point rampant above three bishops dormant, and its motto is "Query."

The form of doubt has greatly changed in a century. It is now neither so universal nor so blatant as it was a hundred years ago. Then it was bitter and mock-

ing; it took it for granted that men of sense would not undertake the defense of the Christian religion and was bold and arrogant. A little later it took the form of ridicule and sported cap and bells. Now it takes itself seriously and draws upon science, psychology, and metaphysics, as well as logic.

Doubtless Christianity has suffered more from ill-tempered and misjudged defense than from open assault. It is humiliating to read the history of the warfare of science with theology from the time of Galileo to the present; but he who thinks that the mistakes of the scientists have been less than those of the theologians only needs to compare the science of Galileo's time with that of to-day.

Every field of investigation has its laws, which must be observed if practical results are to be secured. It is very evident that nothing is to be learned in spiritual things except we work according to spiritual laws. Now, what are those laws, and how do they operate? Who shall teach us in these matters? You would not go to Darwin to be taught music, for he con-

fesses to the atrophy of the musical sense. We go to musicians for music; we go to artists in color for painting. Is it too much to ask that for spiritual things we go to spiritual men? Jesus represents to all time the spiritual in man, and He must become our teacher. We may safely follow Him, for no one taught more plainly than He that while faith ought to be larger than reason, it is not against reason.

Hypocrites have always been in the world, and the Church has no monopoly of them. It is quite safe to say that there are as many of them among doubters as among believers. Some approached Christ in His day. They came in the mask of honesty, but that soon fell off, and they went away with their faces muffled in the red flag of shame. To that class belong to-day the men whose life is father to their doubt. They have mounted guard over conscience and seek to club it into silence with the butt end of their logic. Not satisfied with that, they write out what their sin prompts them to wish, and then put to it the forged signature of a conscience that is dead. That is a forgery

that will not escape either God or man. The man whose doubts are a cover for his sin hastens to present an everlasting discomfiture in his own life and the condemnation of every honest soul.

The man whose doubt is another name for indifference and wilful ignorance is likewise in bad estate. Ignorance is not to be condemned if one is using every means at hand to turn it into knowledge. If we are constantly fretting away the borders of our ignorance and constantly augmenting the store of our knowledge, our faces are set in the right direction, our work is worthy of us and has its reward. Doubt is not a condition of equilibrium; it is temporary and fleeting. It is the path by which we pass to assurance and faith. The man who settles down to permanent doubt is not honest. Get at the truth as best you can. Constantly strive until the point of conviction is reached and even then be open to the light, for all light is of God. If religion can not stand the light, let it go. If it will not bear the test which must obtain in all lands under all suns and systems, you do not want it.

Where any man thinks it is your business to think, where any man forges weapons of the soul,—it is for you to know whether they are of celestial or infernal temper. No man has a right to peddle the truth in the market-place with his own private mark upon it as the only genuine. Jesus never sought to stop men from thinking. He only asked that they be honest in their thinking. He did say that humble men who had never been trained in the schools might find the truth when school men and critics had missed it. There were rabbis in Jerusalem who were groping in darkness and would not enter into peace when the door was set ajar, and so fisherfolk went in before them. How they who spun theories for the sake of the spinning, who multiplied words to conceal their wicked thoughts, who paid tithes of mint and anise to escape the great commands of righteous law—how these were lashed by Him! There was lightning in His eye, thunder in His tones, and His words hissed and stung like a Roman scourge as He said, "Ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?"

The only man who is in condition for knowing is the man who is doing. "If any man will do my will he shall know of the doctrine." Spiritual truth is discerned by the spiritual and by no one else. You do not measure the fragrance of a rose by a yardstick, nor tell the power of the sunbeam by its weight on the scales. If a man will take down the shutters of his soul the darkness of doubt will go out before the light.

The only doubter that Jesus was interested to help was the honest and unwilling doubter—the one who would like to know and was really pained that he did not. From three examples I think we may learn Jesus' method with all honest doubters.

The first is the case of Nicodemus. He came to investigate the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship, but Jesus, by a single sentence, made Nicodemus the subject of his own investigation. You pride yourself on your birth. "Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." Have you met that condition? No Boswell ever recorded a conversation as

searching as that which John sets down. There are great principles here which should strike the simple solemn and open unexplored vistas to the thoughtful. Still, there rings out the principle of my text, only the heavenly can understand heavenly things, and always and everywhere spirit is born of spirit and not of flesh. Nicodemus struggles at the mystery of it, but Jesus has to show him it is no mystery at all, but the thing of all things that a master in Israel should understand. Altho this is true, the patient method of Jesus in overcoming his prejudice and in bearing with his dulness is like the patience of a mother. That patience has never failed to this day. There are many things that the best of us do not know, but what we do not know need not break our hold upon what we do know. All things are not of the same importance in the spiritual realm. It is pathetic to see men multiply their differences over matters that are of infinitesimal importance. It is sad to see them losing sight of great spiritual mountains to gaze on little hillocks of human fabrication; what part

higher criticism, so-called, plays on the glib tongues of the would-be skeptics, and how many good people are disturbed thereby. But what is higher criticism? A method of study, possible of application only by men of long and accurate training. Its deductions up to this present moment have no more affected the integrity of the spiritual teaching of the Bible than the cut of an ambassador's coat affects the message he bears. The honest student in spiritual things acknowledges there is much he does not understand, but that gives him incentive and not discouragement. For he reasons that since that which was mystery a year ago is now plain, the mystery of to-day shall likewise be solved in some happy to-morrow. Meanwhile, he walks in faith and joy "along the certified path of experience."

In the case of Thomas we have another view of Jesus' method with doubters which differs somewhat from that with Nicodemus. Jesus gives to Thomas what He refused again and again to give to scribe and Sadducee. That is because a

doubt in the heart of love merits a sign which doubt in the heart of indifference would only abuse. The doubt of Thomas was not from lack of devotion. When Jesus showed him that He was to die at Jerusalem he said to the disciples, "Let us go up, too, that we may die with him." Thomas was one who thought his way to truth. He must have evidence that satisfied him, and instead of finding fault with him Jesus gave him what he asked. He recognized the kindness of the master and his whole soul cried out, "My Lord and my God." If you are a Thomas instead of a John you shall have your need met. All that you can ask for will be given. Jesus has a place for the doubtful as well as the trustful.

Still another phase of Jesus' method was shown a week earlier when he journeyed with His disciples to Emmaus. Here we see His attitude toward those whose hopes are fled and who tread close to the verge of despair. Listen to His tender greeting: "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad?" In

sooth, they had enough to make them sad. Their dawn had faded out, their hope was crucified. The spell that He had cast over their spirits by His goodness and power still held, but there seemed to be nothing left but the old life among boats and nets. Have your hopes vanished and all the joy of life clean faded out? Has the substance of home and fortune gone up in smoke or down in flood? Have the dear faces where love shone been taken out of your arms and laid away in God's acre, and have you stood benumbed and yet true at heart with a great question upon your lips, yet with a feeling that something remained that was more glorious than anything that could be lost? If you have had such experiences as these you know the attitude of those men who walked and were sad. Jesus might have said at once: "I am Jesus, who was dead and am alive again." But while that would have thrown them into ecstasy, it would have furnished them no clew to the evidence that had been accumulating for thousands of years and which He poured upon their hearts with all the power of a tremendous conviction.

He took the scriptures and showed them that the things they were lamenting were the things that had been prophesied, and, instead of being cast down about them, they ought to rejoice that they had worked out as the plan of the ages demanded. He talked to them of the evidence presented with a fervor of expectancy that burned its way into their very souls and they were better anchored now than they had been at any previous time, even in the face of the crucifixion.

There are unwilling doubters in society and the church to-day whom I long to see in touch with a risen Christ. There are those who believe in Jesus as teacher and example, but not in Jesus of the empty tomb. Theirs is a dead Christ and therefore a powerless one. So long as the disciples had only a dead Christ they were a frightened and disordered company, but something happened and they dared the world. They went to their martyrdom as to a festival, and with the symbol of a felon's death they conquered the throne of the Cæsars and won the world to bow before it. What had happened? Joseph's

grave was empty and He who was dead was alive again. A living Christ is the world's conqueror. It is true that Christian men have had wrong notions of God and have put on the throne of heaven an angry being, but that is better than to have no God, for His anger was only against evil. It is true they set their God to watch the thoughts and deeds of men like a detective, but even that was better than to have no being to take cognizance of good or evil. It may be their God was vindictive, but at least He could be appealed to, and more than one tyrant in those days said concerning his rage and his victim:

> "Just my vengeance complete
> The man sprang to his feet
> Caught at God's skirt and prayed—
> So I was afraid."

If such a faith as this was not warming to the heart it at least left conscience unimpaired. I would much prefer to work out the problem of my life with a firm grasp on duty and conscience than to stumble aimlessly on, "life a maze, the

heavens empty, the sordid world the only reality."

Knowledge may be a cause of doubt. The Renaissance which was the father of Protestantism, was also the father of modern doubt. Before that Christian doubt was a thing almost unknown. It was belief and disbelief, the full acceptance or full rejection of the Gospel scheme; but larger and more accurate knowledge with the possibility of thinking for one's self caused the unsettling of many minds. But knowledge is also the cure of doubt. Jesus does not ask us to be persuaded without evidence. He deals with us as kindly as with the doubting and discouraged disciples of old. Are we willing to approach Him for the settlement of our doubts? Are we minded to do His will? Are we willing to stand by His side and look at life and destiny from His standpoint? Doubt has no power for good save as it leads to conviction. The doubter is the negative man. If you wish light and knowledge you must be positive. Your life has as little hope and victory in it as had the lives of those men who were going

back to a work for which they had lost all heart. You can not live usefully and contentedly in a Christless world. You can not measure up to the call of the manhood within you. What you want is power, and the Master said before He went away, "Ye shall receive power," on such conditions as He named. He knows your nature, for He fashioned it. He knows its possibilities and all its limitations. Come to Him. Power will come to you when a new life is born within. That is the answer to Nicodemus. Power will come to you in the hour when you say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God"; and if you will join yourself to Jesus on the tearful way to Emmaus your doubts will be flooded with light, infinite joy shall break upon your despair, your famished soul shall be fed, and many shall hear the old cry, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

II

THE ALTERNATIVE OF FAITH

> *But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*—DANIEL iii. 18.

THE book of Daniel grips the soul, and has nerved unnumbered martyrs in lions' dens and fiery furnaces so that they have not flinched. The form of the Fourth has steadied them against the hot breath of the flame, and because of them many a man has been forced to say with Nebuchadnezzar, "There is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

This victory of the seen has been marvelous in its power to quicken the faith of men, but I wish to present another side of the teaching of this book. We will call it, if you please, the alternative of faith. It is a lesson which there is great need for us to learn and it is a higher lesson than any other taught by this book.

What a magnificent answer that was to the hot and thunderous sentence of the king! Looking into the glow of the waiting furnace where others had been cremated before them, they quickly answered the autocratic king: "We are not concerned to plead for your favor in that. If it be as you say, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." The only question is, What is God planning in this case? If He be able, in harmony with the purpose which He has, to save us from this physical suffering and death, He will do it. It is not a question of ability; it is only one of wisdom and plan. And then we come to these words which Canon Farrar says are among the sublimest words uttered in all scripture: "But if not." They represent the truth that the man who trusts in God will continue to say even to the end: "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him." They are the triumph of faith over all adverse circumstances. It has been the glorious achievement of man to have attained, by the inspiration of the

breath of the Almighty, so clear an insight into the truth that the voice of duty must be obeyed to the very end, as to lead him to defy every combination of opposing forces.

It is man's testimony to his indomitable belief that the things of sense are not to be valued in comparison to that high happiness which arises from the law of conscience, and that no extremities of agony are commensurate with apostasy. For wherever there is left in man any true manhood he has never shrunk from accepting death rather than the disgrace of compliance with what he despises and abhors. This it is which sends our soldiers on the forlorn hope, and makes them march with a smile upon "the batteries which vomit their cross-fires upon them"; and so die by thousands the unnamed demigods. By virtue of this it has been that all the martyrs have "with the irresistible might of their weakness" shaken the solid earth.

It is King Nebuchadnezzar who speaks in Babylon, but it is King Custom or Self-interest or Prejudice or Folly that speaks

in New York, tho the language is one and the same: "At what time ye hear the music, fall down and worship" and it shall be well. Will you do it, young man? "I suppose so; the remainder do. I shall lose my place; I shall be poor; I shall be left behind in the race. No office and no emolument will be mine unless I do. I will worship your image, O king." Another pair of hands shackled; another light gone out; another possible martyr gone over to the safe crowd. Cross his name off. He has sold himself out for ease or for pelf. His pedestal is empty. Chant for him as Browning chants for his "Lost Leader":

> "Just for a handful of silver he left us,
> Just for a riband to stick in his coat.
> He alone breaks from the van and the freeman;
> He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves.
> Blot out his name, then record one lost soul more,
> One task more declined, one more footpath untrod;
> One more devil's triumph and sorrow for angels,
> One wrong more to man, one more insult to God."

You read of the young man who refuses to lie about the goods and is discharged by his employer; he is hired by another

man who hears of his integrity and pays him a large increase in salary. If I could be advanced in pay and place I would tell the truth. Honesty in that case would certainly be the best policy, but I am putting the alternative to you to-night.

If he will deliver, well; but if not—what then? Are you ready to join the goodly company of martyrs? If the curtain rings down not on four men unscathed in the midst of the flames, not on three new princes in Babylon, but on an urn full of ashes—what then?

"What if you're done to the death,—what then?
If you've done the best that you could,
If you played your part in the world of men,
The Great Critic will call it good.

"Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,
His step may be slow or spry;
It's not the fact that you're dead that counts,
It's only, How did you die?"

Let me quote some words of testimony and of warning spoken last week to Methodists by our strenuous president. In speaking of our pioneers he said: "They

had in them the heroic spirit—the spirit that scorns ease if it must be purchased by failure to do duty; the spirit that courts risk and a life of hard endeavor if the goal to be reached is really worth attaining. Life is not easy; if you want ease at the end of your life, you will look back mainly on ignoble things. These men drove forward and fought their way upward to success because the sense of duty was in their hearts, in the very marrow of their bones. It was not with them something to be considered as a mere adjunct to their theology standing separate and apart from their daily life. They had it with them week-days as well as Sundays. They did not divide the spiritual from the secular. They did not have one kind of conscience for one side of their lives and another for another."

Take a little further this question of conscience and its victories. Doctor Richards in a recent sermon has called attention to the attitude of our American boys at the Paris Exposition. They had gone over as contestants in the games on condition that the games should not be held

on Sunday. Against that they had entered a unanimous protest. But they found out finally that their protest had been disregarded and Sunday would be the day. Their God had not delivered them. Now what shall they do? A few of them weakened, but most of them stood firm. Afar in a strange land in the midst of alien people and customs, where men laughed at their prejudice and where some of their own countrymen tried to beat down their scruples, when it meant to give up coveted honors and prizes and to make their long journey go for nothing. Nevertheless the boys would not bow before the image, and they watched their hopes go up in smoke; but they did not yield an iota of conscience. I would rather have a boy of mine do that than to outrun Mercury or outshine Apollo or outwrestle Hercules.

Most men seem to think that their prayers are unanswered unless they are answered in the affirmative, and that the only things that God is concerned in are the things that turn out in profit on the earthly side. What we need to understand

is this: that tho there may be more men go to the scaffold and the stake than escape them, tho there be more eaten of lions than escape their jaws, tho there be more poor for Christ's sake than are rich because of Him, *nevertheless,* "we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image" which the devil sets up.

Look over the history of the world and you will find that God has not always seen fit to deliver out of bodily harm. He who let Jeremiah be sawn asunder, John the Baptist be beheaded, Peter be crucified, Paul be beheaded, Polycarp be burned, and also took Savonarola and Huss and Latimer and Ridley to heaven in chariots of fire, has often let men in our time glorify His name in the midst of tribulation. Bunyan goes to prison and Sidney and Russell to the block; and John Brown, shaggy old son of the sod, goes to the scaffold, while an army thundering along the path which his poor old arm blazed through the awful desolation of slavery, sing as they march, "John Brown's body lies molding in the grave, but his soul is marching on."

James Guthrie, "the short man who could not bow," knew something of this. He was the son of the Lord of Guthrie. He went before the drunken Parliament and said, "Throughout the whole course of my life I have studied to be serious, and not to deal in a slack hand in what I did look upon as my duty." At the last he said, "My lord, my conscience I can not submit." It is in five words the creed of all good soldiers of Jesus Christ; the Iliad of the martyrs in a nutshell. On the day of his execution, he said, "This is the day the Lord hath made." As James Guthrie walked up the steps of his gallows, God's glory, as in Stephen's day, smote him in the face and he said, "I durst not redeem my life with the loss of my integrity. I did judge it better to suffer than to sin. I take God to record that I would not change this scaffold with the palace or miter of the greatest prelate in Britain."

Once in a while God lets a man go early to his grave that he may make him and his cause immortal, but do not think for that reason God or man is defeated. And what is true of great causes is true also of

humble men and women. We have prayed to be delivered from pain and we have gone into the prayer-meeting and said, "I have had a great answer to prayer. God has defeated the evils that compassed me and I have been restored again to health." But what of those saintly souls who will never come to prayer-meeting any more? They will never know a well hour till the angel of death shall kiss them into perpetual health. What of those who feel the fiery furnace grow hotter day by day, and see the mortal tenement damaged, beyond all power to raise? Is the form of the Fourth only in furnaces where Nebuchadnezzar puts out the fire? Was Stephen less a victor than Daniel?

And how is it when the storms against a man are like those which swept the coast of Great Britain not long ago, and one has to put with God to sea? Wealth and honor come to some because they walk in the paths of righteousness, but they do not come to all who walk that path. I know some men who had a chance to be rich, but they gave it up in order to keep their soul alive and they never had a second

chance. You and I know enough of human life to know that not every Job gets out of his poverty and ashes. I have known men to die with the potsherd still in their hands scraping away at their sores. If I am to talk to all men I must have something to recommend beside a devotion to God which is given for earthly cause. "Doth Job serve God for naught?" was the devil's taunt in the days of his prosperity, but there came a time when that taunt was dumb.

Here is the sublime attitude for a true servant of God, who fears temptation or earthly defeat: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

In the heavenly Halls of Fame, John saw a resplendent company and he asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" And the answer was: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are

they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple."

I have a growing suspicion that we need not waste our sympathies on the men who are going by the short cut of tribulation to meet supernal victory. I exhort you, young men and women, to be true to the right, no matter what the cost. No harm can befall a good man, living or dying, in this or in any other world. The victory of faith is grander than that of ease or emolument.

III

A SURE METHOD WITH DOUBT

And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts.—DANIEL v. 16.

IF Daniel were alive to-day with his ability to dissolve doubts unimpaired and unimpeached, he would be the busiest man of his time. And yet ours is no more an age of doubt than any other which has preceded it. There was crass infidelity a hundred years ago in our universities and a flippant skepticism among educated people which is now quite outgrown. It will always remain true, however, that each generation must settle its own doubts. The generation is made up of individuals, and the great questions of the soul are personal questions. They must be wrought out for the most part by individual stress and struggle. There are phases of doubt that receive greater emphasis than others at any given time. In one generation a

deistic philosophy seems to triumph, in another agnosticism is at the fore. The generation now passing has fought out the great battle of evolution and we may fairly say that this thing is in no way a menace to the Christian faith. There have been decisive battles on the field of Biblical criticism. Positions once held by the two great forces have been proven untenable, and the orthodox party, by giving up minor things that could not be defended, has made its position stronger than ever before. The doubts to which I wish to refer, and which I would be glad to scatter as specters of the night, are not so much of the theoretical as of the practical sort. They are the kind which make stout men weak, which paralyze great upward movements in society and cut the nerve of personal devotion.

It is not strange or unreasonable that we should have doubts. We begin life knowing nothing. We journey in the land of the unknown at every step. We investigate and experiment and question. Little by little, with the material brought from the unknown, we build the structure

called knowledge, and in doing this we form a habit which masters us. It will not let us rest. Life has become a great interrogation point and our journey a voyage of discovery. We sail into every beckoning bay. One is a fair harbor and nothing beyond; another a stretch of sand bar and shoal, and we are fortunate if we are able to again put to sea; while another proves to be the mouth of a great river, up whose tide we go to glorious discoveries in a delectable country. The man who thinks can not stop his thinking. Often he is mocked by it and positively punished like some adventurous mountain-climber, but climb he must tho he fail in his quest.

> "That low man seeks a little thing to do,
> Sees it and does it.
> This high man with a great thing to pursue,
> Dies ere he knows it."

It is no wonder, then, that we doubt, for life is too short to know all. Nor is it to be wondered at that our doubts concern themselves chiefly with religious truth. In the very nature of things religious truth is supernatural. It is not so much

contrary to, as beyond, our senses. Its purposes are not like the axioms of mathematics. The whole field of religion is beyond the realm of the senses and of scientific rules. Therefore it is to be wondered at least of all when we find that in this field speculation and doubt run riot.

There is another fact to be considered, which Horace Bushnell states admirably: "Our faculty is itself in disorder. A broken or bent telescope will not see anything rightly. So a mind, wrenched from its true line of action, discolored and smirched by evil, will not see truly, but will put a blurred, misshapen look on anything. Truths will only be as good as errors and doubts as natural as they."

In view of all this, let us have done with abusing those who doubt. Doubt properly pursued is only knowledge in the raw, and Doctor Parks was right when he said: "Infidelity is the ultimate result of checking the desire for expanded knowledge." Let us frankly tell our young people that doubt is not a final condition save to a dishonest mind. Through the doubt of to-day they will come to the knowledge

of to-morrow; and let us also remind them that what they hold as the truth to-morrow should have great expansive power, so that coming days will give more light and add to the proportions of the truth.

"I have heard of thee that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts," was the king's greeting to the Hebrew. This same Daniel had stood before the king's father when he, too, was sore burdened with mystery. He did not claim for his own unaided wisdom the power to settle doubts, but stoutly and honestly owned the source of his power saying, "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." It may be said truthfully that the only sure method for the solution of life's problems and the dissolving of its doubts is by entering into right relations with Him. If it is objected that one of the great doubts of life relates to His very existence, the answer is, Every man is conscious of the great ethical imperative, "I ought." This relates him to some great law and hence to some great lawgiver. It would not seem to be a very exalted prayer, "O God, if there be a God, enlighten my soul,

if I have a soul." And yet a prayer like that with an honest purpose to follow each faintest ray of light would not be unavailing.

In the matter of dissolving religious doubts, the ultimate purpose is everything. No man ever comes to the truth by being simply curious. Speculation for speculation's sake leads nowhere. The mind is filled with conflicting arguments. It is a poor cause which has not something plausible about it. And so the mind chases itself from sophistry to sophistry, from controversy to controversy, darkening counsel and coming out nowhere.

The first thing for an honest seeker after truth to do is to pledge himself to abide by the truth as he finds it. To play fast and loose with one's convictions is the first and second death. To fail to use the light we have, to refuse to live up to what we know is right, is to put one's self into the darkness of eternal doubt. Plato reasoned well when he said: "Atheism is a disease of the soul before it becomes an error of the understanding." French atheism was a foregone conclusion when

one considers the condition of French morals. Why should a man believe in God when his life was one long rebellion against Him? Why should he not cry, "After us the deluge," when conscious that nothing but an unfathomed sea could cover the putrefaction of his life? When a man has made up his mind to give himself to the sensual and the material it is hollow mockery for him to profess a desire to know the truth. The truth abides with no man who will not use it, and, on the other hand, if he be like Romanes, pure of heart and purpose, he will think his way out of the darkness unto the full light of revealed religion and pillow his dying head upon a certain faith. Knowing the life of Shelley we would expect him to be proud to write himself down "an atheist"; knowing the life of Wordsworth we would expect the epitaph in Grasmere Church to read as it does, "To the memory of William Wordsworth, a true philosopher and poet, who, by a special gift and calling of Almighty God, whether he discoursed on man or nature, failed not to lift up the heart to holy things, tired not

of maintaining the cause of the poor and simple, and so in perilous times was raised up to be a chief minister, not only of noblest poetry but of high and sacred truth."

Before you seek any farther for the dissolving of your doubts ask yourself honestly the question, "Am I unalterably given over to the principle of right-doing; am I ready to obey the voice within me as stedfastly as Socrates obeyed his 'demon,' even tho it should cross my purposes and bring bitter losses?" It will be easy to believe in immortality when we live a life that is good enough to last forever. We shall not doubt the fatherhood of God when we give ourselves to the practise of the brotherhood of man.

Our doubts trouble us and thereby prove that doubt is not a state of equilibrium. We must move on toward the light. Action! action! This is the panacea for doubt! If any man will do God's will he shall know of His doctrine. Do you doubt the power of prayer? To whom do you think the reality of that matter is revealed? Certainly not to the man who never prays. Put yourself as best you can

in the attitude of prayer and listen. You will then be able to know whether God talks back. You have sat in the pew for years, and you have heard sermons without number on the great fundamentals of the Christian faith. To some of them you have given intelligent assent, and yet you find yourself still in doubt and uncertainty. Why is it thus with you? There can be but one answer. You have not thrown yourself in holy surrender at the feet of the truth you have known. It costs something to do that. I pity the man who has no Bethel in his life—no place where he has faced God and duty and said, "I will" to the divine "You ought." Paul had his Damascus, Luther his Erfurt, Wesley his Aldersgate, and Bushnell lecturing to the students of Yale said: "There is a story lodged in the little bedroom of one of these dormitories, which I pray God his recording angel may note, allowing it never to be lost."

Do not be impatient with your doubt; only be sure that you are moving toward the light you do see. Not what we are, but what we are becoming; not where we

stand but whence we come and whither we go—these are the great things about which we should be concerned.

The fruit of the tree of faith may be plucked too soon and it is then valueless. It takes a full season to ripen the best of nature's products, and there are some things in faith which only years and frost and storm will bring to maturity. Bushnell said that one of the greatest talents in religious discovery is the finding how to hang up questions without being anxious about them. Look at them now and then, and by and by when you turn some corner of thought you will be delighted and astonished to see how quietly and easily they open their secret and let you in. I knew a great teacher of mathematics who always kept some hard problems by him. He would work on one awhile and put it back in his pocket still incomplete. After weeks and months the problem would be solved and another take its place in his thought. There are many who say with easy assurance, "Lord, I believe," but they have never thought enough to have any doubts. They have no sympathy

with those who die for a man or a cause. They could believe anything that seemed to be necessary for a good position in society and a comfortable income. The man who is honest must adjourn some of his questions and not be impatient. I expect to carry some of my problems with me into that larger life toward which all men move, but that fact does not trouble me. Some things I have settled, and others can wait until the day when all mystery shall be made clear.

One of my parishioners some years ago taught me a great lesson. She was a lady of culture and refinement. She had been at the head of a great school for many years. Her eyesight at last failed her and she became totally blind. I saw her at the close of a service feeling her way up the aisle from pew to pew that she might shake hands with me. The thought of her great suffering and loss fairly overwhelmed me, and I said with deep emotion as I clasped her hand, "It will all be light up yonder and you will know why God has permitted this great affliction to enter your life." She lifted a face trans-

figured by ineffable peace and said, "If I am so happy as to get to heaven I shall let bygones be bygones and shall not trouble the Lord for any explanations." If one has a spirit like that, whatever doubts he has can wait.

There are but a few things that are absolutely necessary to Christian faith. Be sure that you have them, no matter what the price demanded may be. Do not try to make a bargain for a safe and pleasant course: that is an awful mocking of the truth. But having settled the great problems, be assured that you need not be greatly harassed about the lesser ones. Men have set up standards which God never ordained. We have multiplied doctrines and dogmas to the confusion of the mind and, I fear, to the loss of the soul. Worse than all, men have forgotten that right living is more important than right views. They have burned heretics to get rid of their heresy, and have banished good men who disagreed with them. Have patience with other men that they may have patience with you. Let your life recommend your creed. Right opinions

will avail us no more than they avail the devil and his angels, unless we hold them in the golden chalice of a pure and honest life. The great truths of life are not simply intellectual truths, and the processes by which they are revealed are not chiefly intellectual. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

Doubt which is in moral earnest is a servant of God to bring the truth. It has preceded all great reforms in the individual and in the community. A faith which has been forged out through the awful heat of doubt is the only kind that becomes an anchor to the soul. It is worth going through the fiery furnace to find the form of the Fourth. The conviction which honest doubt leads to is the conviction which has shaken the world. Do not scorn any man, and least of all the truth he holds. Keep the integrity of your own mind. Think honestly, think seriously; for life's questions are solemn questions. Do not be obstinate and refuse to own a new truth which contradicts some other position you once held. Above all things, realize that the truth is the only thing that

will free you from an evil life. The verdict of the ages and the verdict of the facts is that the truth is to be sought in a personality and not in a thing, and no one has arisen to dispute His words who said: "I am the truth." It is to Him I ask you to come. Well may you say to Him: "I have heard of thee that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts."

IV

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.—I. JOHN, v. 4.

THE last word in this pregnant sentence is the one which first arrests our attention. It is not a new word to the reader of the holy scriptures, nor is it a new word in the world's literature. To settle the meaning of that word and to defend the same, nations have arrayed themselves against nations; the wisest men of the centuries have withstood each other in mighty debate; the flames of persecution and the iron fingers of torture have been invoked to accomplish what arguments could not. It has been mighty in all the world's history to make or to mar the interests of mankind. It had its birth when Abel, by faith, offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. It leapt into newness of life

when Martin Luther rose from his knees to his feet on the holy staircase and thundered over Germany and the world, "The just shall live by faith." This word faith, as men use it, is synonymous with intellectual belief. One's faith in certain doctrines of science, laws of physics, or practicability of invention, is established entirely by intellectual processes. Claims are accepted or rejected on certain evidence and a judgment rendered according to such evidence, which men call belief. It was left for the Bible to introduce a kind of belief, arrived at after processes radically different from these and the explanation of which is put thus, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." As a definition the apostle tells us: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." I can accept that scholarly comment which makes faith the subsistence or that upon which the things hoped for depend; but, I ask my scholarly friend, is faith itself of no value, save as the basis of some expected gift? Is faith but a sentiment, the simple emotion of the heart? Education is a

basis of success, but success does not always come to the educated. Is the same thing true of faith, that while it is the basis of things hoped for, the things which faith claims do not always come? If you demonstrate that to me, I will step from the pulpit never to enter it again. Out into the night I throw this challenge. If ever, since the morning stars sang together, the prayer of faith has gone unanswered, and a saint has risen from his knees empty-handed and defeated, then the integrity of God's government is broken, the pledges of His throne are void, and heaven is bankrupt before a claim it can not meet.

What, then, is faith? I answer in the words of our ripest scholarship, Faith is the assurance of things not seen; and further, I return to the words with which I began, Faith is the substance of things hoped for. What are you seeking, the shell or the kernel, the seeming or the substance? If you are after the real, remember *faith is the substance.* In other words, faith is of more value than the simple thing you seek to

get through it. You are praying for business prosperity; but if you have faith in God, you can get along without houses and lands and still be happy. Nay, you are richer than Gould or Vanderbilt. You are standing by a new-made grave; the dews of the night are on your head, and tears bedew your cheeks. You "sigh for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still"; but if faith be in your heart, the faith which lifts the veil, the faith which pushes back the gates and shows you the ineffable glory, with the tender Shepherd of the pierced hands folding your lambs in His bosom,—if faith does that, it were better far than that your prayer should be answered, and the green sward break at your feet, to give you back the mortal and corruptible again. Ah, yes, beloved, faith is the substance of things hoped for. When for a debt of a thousand dollars you put a check into my hand and I am satisfied, what does it mean? With faith in your heart, you have a series of blank checks, signed by the Almighty. Fill them out! Fill them out! remembering there is but one law, "Ac-

cording to your faith be it unto thee." Until the Infinite is forced to suspend payment, because his treasure-house is empty, this definition will not be shaken, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." If my friend, without this experience, suggests that my definition is to him in an unknown tongue, I must answer that there is no power of description or unit of measurement save that which is the product of experience. How shall I tell you the power of a sunbeam by its weight on the scales? How shall I surround God with a definition, or with a formula explain light to the man born blind? Where shall I find a unit of the same kind? It takes something more than a yardstick to measure the fragrance of a rose or the holy grandeur of some immortal symphony. If ever your path lies along the road to Emmaus until your heart begins to burn and your eyes are opened, you shall have your definition. The granite statue of Memnon was said to give forth sounds when touched by the morning sun—the greeting of Memnon to Aurora, his

mother. When your stony heart, touched by His rays who is the "Sun of righteousness" and the "Light of the world," shall break forth into a hallelujah chorus —the greeting of a sinner to his Savior— then I will send the world to you when it asks me for faith's definition.

What is meant by the world? I can not think with some eminent men that the Jewish Church constituted the world to which the apostle refers. That term has a far wider significance. It means those sins of which the world is at once the occasion, the arena, and the witness—the nameless corruptions of this material and corruptible, but it means more than this. It claims intellect as well as body. It means that doubt which sees nothing grand or reverent, which freezes the currents of all true aspiration and seeks its hereafter at its feet; that philosophy which finds its father in an atom and calls a molecule its mother; that spirit which values the crown of life at the market value of its antiquated gems in dollars and cents; but further than this it also means those sorrows which fall with

crushing weight on human hearts. To many of you the world means a place of disappointments and of buried hopes; a place of pain and sorrow, where the grave-digger plies his spade and the mourners go about the streets. It was not otherwise two thousand years ago. If faith has any triumph she must win it over sin and doubt and sorrow.

Now that we understand who is to go to battle we are ready to set the battle in array. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The figure here used indicates that the battle is pitched. I need take no time to prove that. You are forced to give battle whether you will or no. Why is not this question forever settled, do you ask? Because each man must settle it for himself. Moses won the victory, by faith, three thousand years ago, and the court of Egypt bore him witness, but that was not your battle and it can not be your victory. The victory on Carmel was faith's victory for Elijah, but its record is preserved to encourage you to go to battle. This must be for you either the victory of faith or

of the world. It would be as lonely a fight as that between Jacob and the angel, but ah, if you might be made by it a prince of God! Lonely, did I say? Nay, that can not be. In the Colosseum at Rome eighty thousand spectators looked upon the fight, but there is a greater company interested for you.

But the battle hastens. There stands the World and he has brought with him the Flesh and the Devil to stand on either hand. Who dares to give him battle? It is a repetition of the old battle in the valley of Elah. There stands the Goliah of modern doubt, and utters again and again his haughty challenge: "Choose you a man for you and let him come down to me." Lo, these many days has the Philistine defied the armies of the living God. Is there no one to face him? It is time for the David of faith to leave his quiet rest and the sweet peace of holy meditation and come forth to battle. Do not cumber him with the clumsy armor of some philosophic Saul. Let him come as of old, empty-handed, but as of old, let him say to Goliah, "Thou comest to me with a

sword and with a spear and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand, and I will smite thee and take thine head from thee, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." I know there are plenty to say to our David, "Why hast thou come down hither, and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? Send faith to the nursery! Let women and children sing of it in their lullabys, but we are men and will not listen. Reason, argument, demonstration,—bring these, or else be silent. Except I shall see the prints of the nails and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. We have all these in other matters; we will take no less in the realm of religious truth." Indeed! Let us see! What is the sum of your personal investigations? What have you that you did not take second-hand, and take by faith at that? You talk about the distance of the stars. Did you ever measure it? You talk about the size of the earth and its velocity. Show us your instruments and your fig-

ures. You talk about chemical formulæ, about the laws of electricity and steam. Who made them known to you? The fact is, you do not know any more about the personal demonstration of these things than the polyp knows of the wave-swept shore and mighty depths of the sea. The only omens you can get are those which the currents sweep past you. Copernicus and Galileo and Herschel lift their telescopes to the heavens, and the world stands around them and asks, What do you see? and then publishes what they say. Hugh Miller and Dana translate the romance of the ages when the world was young, which the finger of time had traced in red sandstone and granite ledge, and the world credits the strange story. Cuvier and Agassiz bring from their fossil graves the motley skeletons of a prehistoric or forgotten age, and tell us of their size and habits, and we believe them. Herodotus and Tacitus and Livy, Macaulay and Hume and Gibbon wrote history, and we have faith to believe their record and talk about it as if we knew it to be true, tho some of their affirmations make

stranger fiction than Sindbad or Aladdin or Münchausen.

The simple fact is, from the man who sends his goods for money he has not seen, to the scholar who fixes at the head of his thesis the latest utterance of some investigator, men walk in this world by faith. It is faith which binds hearts together; faith which is the goddess of the fireside; faith which cements the social fabric. What mighty structure was ever reared which had not faith for its corner-stone? On the wharves of Genoa a sailor stands. Faith is painting strange visions on his sky. In spite of ridicule and threat and insult, he turns the prow of his vessel toward the west and sails into the unknown. Whoever stood at the wheel in all that eventful voyage, faith was the pilot that steered the craft; and it was faith that lifted a new world out of the sea for him who gazed from the masthead of the *Santa Maria*. Our fathers laughed at the idea of traveling twenty miles an hour or sailing against the wind, but Stephenson and Fulton believed, and to them was fulfilled: "According to your

faith, be it unto you." To have said, within your memory and mine, that a man would be able to talk so he could be heard one thousand miles, would have commended us to an insane asylum; but somebody believed, and the impossible was done. To whose credit it may stand in the patent office, it still remains true that it was faith which found the telegraph, faith which laid the cable, and faith which brings distant friends to hold sweet converse. In the battle which every inventor and discoverer has fought, faith has been the ally which has won the fight.

Is it anything new or strange or wonderful then, when we find that the law of the past is the law of the present, and that the law of victory on earth's battle-fields is mighty in a more spiritual combat? On what grounds will you take exception to the declaration of my text, "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith?"

Before I go any further, I have a word to say about a faith which is not faith. There are men who never think enough to realize that there are any

mysteries. It is too much trouble to think, and one may get into trouble by thinking. For them things go well, and they utter the proud words, "Lord, I believe." And who are they? Men with large incomes and sure investments. They stand well in society, use themselves well, think well of themselves, are tolerably content with their comforts, so that as some one has said, "While rents and freights keep up you can not fancy they would much feel the loss of God, and to part with the reversion of heaven would hardly affect them like the news of a large, bad debt." They are far more anxious to know how to get a living than to know how to live. Compare that with our stern fathers—unlovely they may be, but holy and mighty for good; "men living plainly for sublime ends; men who had got fear and pain beneath their feet, who welcomed self-denial as an angel in the way; men who walked this world as if it were the vestibule of heaven."

In this world we are apt to look at the things which are seen, and to forget that there are any others. Afflictions are evil

and only evil. Our financial losses are cruel and irrevocable; our dear ones are laid in the graveyard, and in the flood of great waters we will not lift our eyes to the farther shore. God does not hear prayer, but having put us here, leaves us to ourselves to get along as best we can, and finally to be crusht under the wheels of circumstances. Here is a vessel sailing from port, bearing love's fondest treasures and wafted on her way by tender farewells and prayers. In the silence and darkness of the night, the cry of "Fire!" echoes along the decks of the fated craft. Innocent children, helpless women, white-faced men rush together and pour an agony of prayer into the lurid night. Does the great Heart of the universe behold that scene as unmoved as the placid stars? What! Is He harder-hearted than men, and will He not answer a dying man's request? Does He stand as silent as the Sphynx, when with sweet resignation a trusting soul, balancing for the final plunge, sings for her requiem,

"Jesus! lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly;

While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high.

"Hide me, O my Savior! hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last!"

That may sound to you like the wail of the lost, but to the ear of faith it is the glad, prophetic song of a mighty hope. There is a mother in a darkened room. Tread softly and speak low; it is the hour of the passage of a soul. Her cherub heard the angels singing and is slipping out of her arms to follow them home. Is there nothing for her but the sifted earth and the hopeless cry, "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes?" Hush; a smile plays over that wan face, the lips part, she whispers, "Beautiful! Jesus! Angels! Home! Come, mamma!" and she is gone. Gone in blessed company; gone on quick wings! Gone to Jesus and the angels! Gone home! Will mamma come? God help her! If you do not believe that God was on that burning ship, and in that chamber of death, it must be a miracle that keeps you

out of the madhouse. If, as some seem to think, faith has no victories, who has made the mistake? Not the cannibals, for they never heard of faith; not the Hottentots, for they never laid hold upon it; not the rumseller, who for a few paltry dollars led your son to death; not the blasphemer, for he hoped he should find no God to punish his blasphemy; not the oppressor of the poor, for things have turned out as he hoped—these were not mistaken. But the holy, the men whom the high and the low, alike, revered—these were wrong. The mother who loved you and would rather die than deceive you, who told you of Christ and who died in the consolations of the hope she urged upon you; the father who bequeathed to you his faith as the dearest of his possessions, and told you of the supreme wisdom of the Christian's choice—these were mistaken. The men who by their faith have revolutionized the world—Wesley and Luther and Knox and Huss and Wyclif—were the subjects of hallucination and mistake. If these were mistaken, then Christ Himself is enrolled among the

deceived, and the victory He purchased is but a fable and a dream. It seems to me I would rather be deceived if I could be in such company than be possest of all truth and dwell amid debauch and blasphemy. But if father and mother and all saints, if Luther and Paul and Christ were not mistaken, what then? Then faith hath her victories. Faith's victory is over sin.

> "He breaks the power of canceled sin,
> He sets the prisoner free.
> His blood can make the vilest clean,
> His blood avails for me."

It opens the eyes of the blind, unstops the ears of the deaf, and causes the tongue of the dumb to sing.

Faith gives victory over doubts—doubts of God's goodness, doubts of the future, doubts of the reality, and power of a Christian experience.

Faith brings victory to the powers that are unseen. "He had respect unto the recompense of the reward" is written over every successful life. Faith in future good delivers from the power of present

evil. Therefore it oftentimes happens that hovels are happier than mansions, and content dwells oftener in the cottages of the poor than in the palaces of the rich. "Genial almost to a miracle is the soil of sorrow," when tilled by faith. We endure, for we see Him who is invisible.

But the sublimest victory of all is that which is won from the retreating hoofs of the pale horse, whose rider is Death. Well says James Martineau, "The great doctrine of human immortality has received from Christianity its widest and noblest efficacy; has been lifted for many a generation from a low point of probability to the confines of certainty; and has found in the glorified Finisher of faith an answer to the difficulties which most embarrass the divine hope of the human mind. That which a man has and that which he is move about together and live in the same house, till our fancy and our faith grow too indolent to separate them. We fasten him to his possessions, and when they are dropt in death think that he has gone to naught." It is the business of faith to see all things in their intrinsic

value, and it is faith must give us the final victory. I believe there is need for victory here to-day. You are not wearing crape for nothing. This is a land of shadows and earth gives us no light. Who can abide it? Men act as if every graveyard were a monument to the defeat of God and the ruin of all hope. If that be so, then take your hammer and chisel and cut from every tombstone the hand that points upward; cut away the quaintly carved *Resurgam*—I shall rise again—which our fathers loved to carve. Leave no vestige of the words, "I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." Cut away every word which hope and faith have written to give comfort, and above all obliterate that most impertinent and obnoxious falsehood, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." When you have done that, erase from the fleshy tablets of millions of hearts the words of faith which fell from the dying lips of those whose graves you have defaced; and then it will be time for the sun to be darkened and the moon turned to blood and the stars to fall from

their places like smoldering wicks from their sockets. But when faith lights the darkness, how changed! At the entrance to God's Acre she carves, not the inverted torch of Roman despair, but the breaking chrysalis, and writes: "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away." The sublimest proof of immortality is not the analogy of nature, nor even the testimony of the risen dead. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is the eagle eye of faith which penetrates the grave and lays open the mysterious things of death. He believes in immortality who feels already the resurrection within him.

> "Faith builds a bridge across the gulf of death,
> To break the shock blind nature can not shun,
> And lands thought smoothly on the farther shore."

This is faith's glorious victory. When next your path lies in the churchyard tread it with holy confidence; there are the footprints of His pierced feet who is the conqueror of the grave.

I have seen many victories over the king of terrors. I want to tell you of one. A young man of great promise

had completed his preparation and was ready for his profession. His twenty-first birthday was just passed amid great congratulations. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Ambition and love were both urging him to make his mark in the world. Like a bolt out of a clear sky, disease struck him. The day came when the doctor said: "If you have any matters to arrange, do it at once. Your disease is making rapid strides, and the end is not far off." "Die? Now, at the threshold? Years spent in preparation and nothing done yet. Fond hopes to fulfil; a mother to support. Don't any one dare to talk to me of death! I can not, I will not die." But tho all that love could do to build a fortress was done, death scaled the citadel. He had been gay and worldly. Some friend said it is too bad for him to die like this. They said: "Can't you talk with him? But don't speak of death, for he will not listen." What else could I talk about when a man's breath was coming quick? I went and took a friend with me —this old friend, the Bible. Do not ever

try to stand by a death-bed without it. I did not say anything about death, but my friend did the talking and began by saying: "Let not your heart be troubled. In my father's house are many mansions." The dying man turned impatiently, but as my friend went on he grew quiet. At night he sent for the minister and said as he entered: "Tell me about the mansions and what it said about 'your sins being red like crimson.'" His impatience was disappearing. His eyes, bright with unnatural glow, were full of longing. Not until a week had passed did he lay hold by faith on God, and then, oh, wonderful change! A rapture as unspeakable as his former despair transfigured him. Looking up in my face, while death seemed strangely to tarry, he said: "Doesn't it seem rather hard for me to lie here, waiting, when I might be singing among the angels of God?" "Aren't you sorry to go?" I asked. "Unless God wants me to, I wouldn't stay now, if I could." When last I saw him, he turned his face toward me and said: "I thank you so much for coming, but when you come again I hope

I shan't see you." "Don't you want to see me, Charlie?" "Yes, but I'd rather see the angels in heaven." When I came again he had gone, but I knew by the smile he wore that he saw them face to face. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

V

FAITH'S BEATITUDE—AN EASTER SERMON

Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.—JOHN xx. 19.

THESE are the words of Jesus after the dogged doubt of Thomas had been forced to cry, "My Lord and my God." Its plain teaching is that physical evidence is not imperative in spiritual things, and that the last beatitude of the Gospels is in harmony with those that precede it, in that it reverses the emphasis of men and introduces evidences and emoluments which, tho they may be intangible, are the mightiest in God's universe.

We have been accustomed on this day to steady our faith by aid of the great facts concerning which the Gospels bear unimpeachable testimony. I should not be fair to you nor honest with myself if I cast discredit upon, or minimized in any way, those great arguments which have

led skeptical men to give their assent to the fact of the resurrection; but I wish to pass on, with these facts as a stepping-stone, to the consideration of others which rest in part upon them and which are cumulative and mighty in the conviction they produce.

The reconciliation of science and religion has not been altogether successful, for each has insisted upon using the laws of its own realm in the realm of the other. There is something of truth and much of fine irony in Birrell's essay on Christian Evidences. "We seem to be approaching a time in England when skeptics and divines may shake limp hands. The divine no longer need assert that he can compel belief or prove anything, except experimentally upon the sad heart of man, while the skeptic may as well at once admit that he has disproved nothing. The divine may then array himself in the robes of ancient sacrifice and approach the altar, leaving the skeptic to conceal himself behind a pillar in the nave until the service is over."

The analogies of nature are lacking at

so many points that the thoughtful of to-day are not able to give them the probative force which Bishop Butler saw in them.

Nor are the dreams of the poets of such assuring substance as to furnish satisfactory argument. Tennyson sings in hopefulness:

> "My own dim life should teach me this
> That life shall live forever more,
> Else earth is darkness at the core
> And dust and ashes all there is."

But the dread alternative seems to him at times to be within the range of possibilities. Longfellow, in his poem on Charles Sumner, lifts our hearts by a beautiful metaphor from the incompleteness of our present existence to the perfection which he sees beyond.

> "But in the dark unknown
> Perfect their circles seem;
> Even as a bridge's arch of stone
> Is rounded in the stream."

But it disturbs us to reflect that the rounding of the arch in the stream is only a fiction of the eye. Doctor Gordon well

asks: "Is the incompleteness of human life in this world completed in some other only in reflection, imagination, and dream?" Where the bridge's arch seeks completeness, we pass from substance to shadow, from reality to illusion. The completeness that we behold is only a thought, not a fact. Is the radiant life we see beyond but fashioned out of earth's tears, as the rainbow spans its arching glory over the storm, to be dissolved after a passing moment, leaving no vestige behind save a glowing memory in the mind of the wrapt beholder?

But I must not multiply these bitter queries. I only touch upon them to show that the material evidences and the analogies which are bounded by earth leave us in a shoreless swamp and with a heartache as bitter as tears can make it.

The certainty of immortality comes from within, not from without. It is a hope begotten, not an argument concluded. The last words of Goethe were, "Light, light!" The question which has often been asked is, "What did he mean?" The answer to that question will

be given according to the light which has fallen upon the soul which makes reply. Your materialist will answer, "It was but the cry of a man going into the shadows which death throws upon all men." Your man of literary taste replies, "It was the longing of a man who thinks, that he might have light upon the question which he has not solved." But if you ask a man of spiritual insight what those words mean, he will tell you it was the bursting of the vision splendid upon a mortal soul, flooding it with the heavenly illumination. Who are the men who believe in the future life? They are the men of spiritual illumination and they number the world's great souls. Aristotle believed in it; Plato believed in it; Socrates believed in it. Aristotle, almost four hundred years before Christ, used words the counterpart of those which John used concerning Christ, and which Christ used concerning Himself. "In Him is life," said the great Stagirite; "life and duration are continuous and eternal in Him, for this is God."

Not the metaphors of the poets but the

souls of the poets make strong our faith in immortality. We reverence the soul which sings for its swan song "Crossing the Bar," and we do not wonder that his last request of his son was that the poem should conclude all issues of his works. Only a great soul could sing as Browning did in a song which was his own requiem:

"No, at noon-day in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer;
Bid him forward breast or back, as either should be;
Strive and thrive! cry speed! fight on forever
There as here."

But the greatest of all souls believed in the immortal life and founded His Kingdom upon it. To Him, that life was begun here. His own words are: "This is life eternal that they should know thee, the only true God and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." To think of the immortal life as simply a continued existence is to degrade it. The life for which we long must be more than that. It must be a life in harmony with God, in inspired and endless communion with Him.

Then He became personal and tender

with His disciples. He spoke of a home to which He was going as real as the palace of the Cæsars in distant Rome. "In my Father's house are many mansions." If the eternal life had no specific reality He would have told them. He is their advance courier. He will prepare the way for them, will be their guide. It is not to be wondered at that a sealed tomb made them despondent and an empty tomb made them invincible. The apostle said: "Death hath no more dominion over him." God is master and not servant of nature, and Christ's resurrection becomes possible by the divinity within Him.

I pass by the arguments which cluster about His grave. If the only evidences for Christ's resurrection lay at the mouth of a Roman tomb eighteen centuries ago, only those who came in the chill of the third morning, or who fell like dead men before some supernal appearance, could bear witness concerning them; but the fact is the real historical evidences of the resurrection are within our reach and examination.

It has been said that the Church gave to the world a resurrected Christ. The first question to be asked in that connection is, "What gave the Church to the world?" Once there was nothing left of this man's following but one traitor and eleven frightened men. In a few short days there was a company of more than three thousand as stalwart souls as ever went to the stake or the block. What is the explanation of it? There is but one explanation: "This same Jesus hath God raised up." So it was not an hallucinated woman or a frightened Church that gave to the world a resurrected God, but it was the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth that gave the world an invincible Church.

Not only is the existence of the Church a proof of the resurrection of Christ, but the work of that Church is still further a proof of it; for no other than Himself could have sent the Church to such a work as now fills its hands. However imperfectly the Church has accomplished its mission it owns to a high commission. It was sent to be the light of the world. Every school and college which the Church

supports is proof of a resurrected Christ. It was sent not to be ministered unto but to minister. Therefore, every helpful eleemosynary institution, every asylum and hospital is a proof that Christ is moving in His Church. It was sent to save the lost. Every altar where penitents bow, every fresh confession of sins forgiven, is undubitable proof that He still lives who hath power on earth to forgive sins.

To Paul the highest argument was that He had appeared unto him as unto one born out of due season. This personal appearance must ever be the supreme evidence of the resurrection to every individual soul. The power which in old days made lepers clean and caused men born blind to see is not the power of a delusion and a myth. There are many among us who can say as the disciples said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked with us by the way?" The appearances of our Lord which are recorded are to men in time of need; to a despairing company of disciples; to a doubting Thomas; bringing to all faith

and assurance. That He goes among us to-day on the same errand, many of you will bear witness. Of old when the sea wrought and was tempestuous, He walked on the waves and there was a great calm. When the disciples had caught nothing and were discouraged and almost famished, He gave them success and satisfied their need. We should be the most ungrateful of men if we did not acknowledge that we, too, have seen Him in the dark night of useless toil and famished soul and have been helped and fed by Him.

Stephen saw Him in the hour of his martyrdom and the sight of Him made his face shine as if it had been the face of an angel, and the seeing of Him filled him with such rapture that he forgot the mob and the stones, and in his happiness prayed for those who caused his death. So the ragged teeth of the stones did not fret him and the hiss of hate did not disturb. So sweet was his end that the record says "he fell asleep." There have been thousands of martyrdoms since Stephen's time that a risen Lord has made like a coronation. Men have escaped the

violence of the sword tho they fell under its stroke, and the smell of fire was not on the garments of those whose final triumph was sung into the hot breath of the flame. Every time I enter the room where faith triumphs over death and every time I hear the sad-hearted proclaim their trust in Him, I am fain to bow and say with bated breath, "My Lord and my God." I feel His presence there, for none but Himself can make such victories possible; and, tho I see not His wounded feet nor thrust my hand into His side, a clearer vision than that of these dim eyes assures me that He walks with us, who also walks in paradise.

Doctor Gladden asks, "Where does the sky begin?" and answers his question by reminding us that we are all dwellers in the sky. We have lived in it all our lives. The sky that kisses the Matterhorn kisses also the poor man's cabin in the lowliest street. The steamship plows the sky at the same time she cuts the wave, and the artizan hasting to his toil is walking through the sky.

If we ask, "Where does the immortal

life begin?" we have our answer after a like fashion. It is not in some far-off and blessed state which we call heaven, that we are to feel its thrill and know its power, but here and now in these hearts of ours that throb and throb and are like to break, we may feel the calm joy of those who live already the unending life. Before you question the immortal life listen at the door of your own souls. What is this that carelessly cries out for that which shall supplement and complete its very existence? As you look about you the same voice is heard and an infinite longing is written on every face. Balaam can not curse Israel in full view of her spreading tents; neither can the soul lift its voice of prophecy against its own triumph, when the notes of victory are already in the air.

If any man is minded to do he shall know. Every vista unfolds its secret to those who travel on. Many a would-be discoverer has turned the prow of his vessel too soon. In another day a continent would have gladdened his vision, but giving up his search too soon he has

borne back a report true to his experience but false as to the final fact. One of the richest gold mines of the West was once the property of a poor prospector. He grew weary in his search and finally laid down his pick. It was only a foot farther to one of the greatest fortunes of ages, but he went away a poor man and another reaped what might have been his. Not long ago a miner perished from hunger. He lost his way among the intricate chambers of the mine. It was only a few feet from the place where he stopt to a bend in the corridor, where he could have seen the gleam of light which would have led him to the opening and to life.

These are feeble illustrations of the disaster which befalls the soul that gives up its search after light and life. There is light ahead. Untold millions never find it. Do not stop your search until the vision splendid breaks upon your eager soul.

He is always near when we need Him most; for He who rose and sits at the right hand of God is the same Jesus who suffered and died, and the power of His

sympathy and the tenderness of His love have not changed. See the marks of His personality in His blessed work and hear Him say: "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself." He it is who was dead and is alive forevermore, whose arm of love is the power that holds us in dizzy places, whose knowledge is our wisdom, whose watch-care never faileth, and whose love is as boundless as when it led Him to His cross. If any man doubts the risen Christ and has no hope in the immortal life for himself and for those he loves, there is good reason for it. The risen Christ must always be hidden from the world that has not the will to obey, and hence has not the eye to see, its Lord.

The testimony of physical vision my text affirms is not necessary to belief; in fact, it may lead to doubt and mistake. The sun appears to rise in the East, but that is not really true; the earth appears to be flat and the horizon to reach the sky, but it is not so. The ancient astronomer said the sun and all the stars revolved around the earth, and so far as vision went he was right, but we know that he

was wrong. The sun does not set; the seed does not die; the earth does not stand still; the soul that passes out of its tenement has not perished. The presence of the risen Christ is tongued by innumerable hearts and by earthly and heavenly choirs. He ever liveth, and at His girdle hang the keys of death. Because of Him, immortality is ours, every tomb is as empty as the tomb of Joseph, and we may sing over our departed as confidently as the angels sang on the first Easter morning, "They are risen!"

VI

CONSERVATOR OF THE FAITH

I have kept the faith.—II. Tim. iv. 7.

These are the words of a man about to die. They constitute in a brief sentence the sum of the apostle's retrospect. Glancing over the long years of his ministry, he uses this pregnant sentence as the brief epitome of it all. "I have kept the faith." The word "faith" I shall not define in any theological sense. It evidently did not refer to circumcision, nor any article or creed; nor did it refer to the Pauline theology—if there was such a theology. It was all quite simply told in the story of the resurrection. What he means by this "faith" is simply the story of the blessed Son of God as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, the coming of the Savior to lost men; faith in a pardoning God which made him leap from the saddle at Damascus's gate and go into all the world to preach the Gospel

unto every creature. In books of history, the summary is written at the close. So in a human life, between the gloaming and the murk, or when the daybreak of another morning comes intermingling with the shadows of the night, it is very fitting that one should look over his pilgrimage and get some inspiration from the passing years; that he should make some epitome in his own thought, at least—some record of the years which have made up his own life—and tell, both to his own heart and to the world, what that record is. It is a very common thing for men to do. So with this old man, the servant and the slave of the cross. The mists are floating up from the Tiber; he is inside prison walls; the days of his life are almost ended, and the mists of the river are to him the mists of death. Other men have seen the falling of the mists and have shaded their own eyes to look back over the passing years.

Men, when they come down to the close of life, live as they used to live. The old years rush back upon them and they see them all again. The dying chief justice

says: "And now, gentlemen of the jury, we rest our case; the verdict is with you." The great teacher says: "Boys, put up your books. Close the shutters. The day's work is over. Let us go home." So the great man of the senate stood out and, when the shadow fell upon him, cried out: "It is the end of this world. I am content." The great Napoleon cries: "Head of the army!" and is gone. The great king of Denmark holds up his right hand solemnly and says: "There is no blood upon this hand." "Sing me a song," said the dying Guthrie; and the old sailor-preacher, when he came down to die, thought he was a child again, and he clasped his hands together and said: "Mother, it is time to go to sleep"; and he said the sweet words which he had spoken seventy odd years before by the side of his trundle bed,

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep."

So, at the close of the journey, the man of God looks back over all the years and, as his epitome of it, says: "I have kept

the faith." Many a business man, when he is too old to work any more and has reached the last days of his life, spends the time scanning over the years. You remember what good investments you made, or failed to make. You look over the years and say: "If I had only bought that piece of property, I would have been a millionaire, instead of a pauper"; and so you marshal the days that are gone, and you see yourself as a boy sweeping out the office, as a man coming to be a partner, and so you mark the years. The lawyer remembers his great cases—how he pleaded with the lives of men at issue, and remembers the thanks of those who were saved from the gallows. The physician remembers those great hours of watching and those great victories of science over disease. So every man, whatever his business has been, as he comes to the close of his life looks it all over, counts it all up, and sees whether the successes are more than the failures, the laughter more than the tears; but which of these men, tho they may have gained money, tho they

may have gained honor and position, which of them all can make such a holy triumph as the apostle? "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

I call your attention to three things: what the keeping of the faith meant to Paul, what it means to the average Christian, and what keeping the true faith really is. In the case of Paul, whose life had been at the first among his own people, we can see him at the close of the journey, scanning it all over. The years roll back and he is a young man again, dark-haired and happy in the streets of the city that he so often boasted about. We see him a little farther on sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, a student of the knowledge and the wisdom of the men of his time—an imposing man among them, quick, alert, intellectual, strict in his purpose, a man of tremendous possibilities, indignant against wrong, a servant of the right as he understood it.

He remembers the time when he started from Jerusalem and drew near to the City of Damascus. He never forgot it;

that hour never faded out of his life, and here in the prison cell in Rome, he is thinking of it. I fancy that as the apostle is looking over his life, he glances very rapidly over the years before that Damascus journey, and his thought rests first upon that great event in his life. He sees again the flash-light out of the sky, and he sees himself again more dead than alive, lying there prone upon the sand, and going, led by another, into the streets of Damascus. Again the scales fall from his face. Again he passes through Arabia and comes back to do the great message and work and mission of his life. He becomes a follower of Jesus, and how the records of that following are tolled off before him! He sees himself, now under the persecuting hand of his enemies; an earthquake knocked at the prison gate of Philippi, his feet are fast in the stocks; with a shiver, he recalls the time when he floated a day and a night in the deep. He sees himself marching again through the market-place and hears the hiss of the lash as thirty-nine stripes fall upon him in five market-places.

Again he is on a desert island far out in the sea; and again he is coming to the great crisis of his life in Ephesus, when his head is on the block and the executioner's ax is raised and there are two people rushing through the crowd who throw themselves upon him and who say: "Our lives for his. Two lives for one," and under the circumstances, in the strange uprising of the community, he escapes, and all of them go free. If you had forgotten about that, read the sixteenth chapter of Acts, and it will all be made plain to you. So these things pass by him, and, at the end of it all, he comes to ask himself, I presume, "Did it pay? Was it worth while to suffer as I have suffered?" Well, Paul was as exact in his mathematics as he was in his logic, and he has carefully preserved all the records.

Looking them all over at the last, he ran up the columns and he struck a balance, and he said: "I reckon." It was not a matter of guess with him. He had figured it all out and he said: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present

time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." "What!" do you say, "after all that suffering? Could you say that?" "Yes." "Wasn't there some mistake about it?" Well, the items are all preserved and fortunately we can run them over and add them up for ourselves. Let us see how it figures. Here is his credit sheet. It shows: "Five times I received forty stripes (save one); thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a day and a night I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers; in perils of robbers; in perils from my own countrymen; in perils from the heathen; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness." O Paul! You must have been mistaken; there is nothing on earth that could balance an account like that. What is there to be found on the other side of the sheet? If there is anything on the debit side, give it to us and let us

see how you ever made up an account and balanced it as you did. In the sixth chapter of II. Corinthians he wrote: "As unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." What do you say now? Why it looks as if the mathematics of Corinth were correct.

There is nothing better than to have all things, and if you pay the price of it in toil and sweat and blood and tears, if you only get it—it is enough. So we are here to say that Paul has made no mistake. The mathematics of Corinth is correct and, as an expert in this kind of figuring, I am glad to state that I pass it on audited and approved. He figured it rightly and, when he said that the balance was on the side of God and duty and heaven, he was right about it. It pays. It had paid Paul, he thought, and if it paid him I am sure nobody else need to find any fault. Now if you are saying: "Will it pay to be a Christian," think of Paul's record and

see how he figured it up and you have your answer. This was what keeping the faith meant to Paul.

What does it mean to the average Christian? From such a record as this to the record of the average Christian life in the average church is a far cry. Keeping the faith! Why, to too many it means the locking up of something that seemed to be of value in the strong-box and leaving it there and letting the cobwebs grow about it in the safe, saying to ourselves when we feel a little poorer than usual: "I must remember that I have got something locked up there that I can go and get sometime"; and if, at last, we do go out to get it, finding that the thing which seemed to be of value has shriveled and shriveled until there is nothing left of it. Keeping the faith! To too many it means: "My name has been on the church record for twenty years. I go to church in the winter—when it isn't too cold, and in the summer—when it isn't too hot, and in the spring and fall—when it isn't too muddy; but other times I take it easy at home!" A

very little indisposition goes a long ways with regard to the obligations of the Church of God, and then, after a while, when the years have gone and disease lays its hands upon our mortal members, we call in the doctor and, after he is gone, the minister, and we say we have not been as bad as we might have been—"and the mourners go about the streets." Oh, for one hour of Paul's victory there! Oh, for a moment's ring of his glorious exhortation and testimony! "I have kept the faith!" Oh! yes, we would give anything in the world when we get down to the end of the journey, if we had only kept the faith and been true to God and lived a life that would give, day after day, comfort and inspiration to the soul.

It is not keeping the faith to hold a thing like that in such a way as I have stated.

What is keeping the true faith, then? Well, the first thing to be said is that a faith that is worth keeping must be wrought in the soul by a personal experience; the only kind of truth that is worth anything, as I have frequently said,

is felt truth. A dogma! What does a dogma amount to? It is only the skin of truth stuffed—there is no life in it; the only kind of a faith that is worth anything is the faith that has been wrought out in the tug and strain of the soul's effort.

Not long since, I went back to the little New England village where I had first preached the Gospel. When, years ago, I landed in that little village, I carried two sermons in my pocket with which to begin the ministry of the Lord Jesus. It was there that I settled the question of my ministry. I had gone there as a writer for papers and as a student of the law, but, before I got through, I settled the question to give up everything else and give myself wholly to the service of God. And when recently I went there, a man came up to me and looked me in the face and said: "Do you know me?" "Know you? I shall never forget you. You were my first convert in this place, and my heart was stirred more by your coming into the kingdom of God than by almost anybody else from that time to this."

A woman came up to me and said: "Do you know me?" The plowshare of time and of tears had been plowing through her face, and I said: "Know you? Yes, God bless you. The first funeral that happened in this place was the funeral of your son, who had been carried down by a whaler in the Arctic a year and a half before" (and they had just found out that he was dead and there was no corpse there). When this old woman came and stood before me, how it brought back to me the tug on my soul in those early years! Now I preach the same Gospel to-day that I preached there on the first Sunday that I went among them, but, oh, how much it means to me now that it did not mean to me then! There is not a plank in my faith that I have not stood on in the flood of great waters; there is not a single timber that I have put into it that I did not test with prayer and with tears. I have had a faith that has been wrought out by all these years of experience, by successes and reverses, by joys and by sorrows; so I can say, with the conviction of experience, that a faith that is worth

keeping is one that you ventured your whole soul into and have worked out by your own personal struggle.

You learned the multiplication table when you were six or seven years of age and you have not superseded it yet. But what a difference there is between multiplication to you then and the same table to you now! Now it means arithmetic and geometry and algebra and everything else that you have studied from that day to this. You did not know that as a boy, and you thought it a simple thing when you said: "Two times two are four and two times three are six." But that was the voice of all mathematics. That was the voice of all those calculations which have moved and mastered in the great fields of intellectual endeavor. So I came to the altar and said: "I believe in God, the Father, and in Jesus Christ, His Son, and in the Holy Spirit," which was a sentence soon spoken. I did not know what there was in it, but I have been finding out all these years. I know now something of what "God, the Father" means. I know something of

what Jesus Christ, the Savior of men, means. "Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified and raised from the dead." I have crowded a volume into every one of these phrases in this passing generation. So I say again that a faith that is worth while to keep, must be one that has been wrought out by a personal experience.

And, secondly, a faith to be kept must be one that is broad enough to allow of growth. Those things which were the simple facts in the old years, have been expanding themselves. Now they show me the limitless possibilities that were in them. Was it a little thing to profess faith in God and my personal relation to Him as a redeemed soul? That is the difference between the faith of a boy and the faith of a man. Men of years, men with gray hair, who were comforted in your youth, tell me now what does your faith mean to you? What is the difference between the early years and to-day? If you had the right kind of faith, how gloriously it has amplified itself. Did you ever see an old man with a withered apple in his

hand which had grown black with the passing of the years and dried down until it was so hard that the knife could not cut it? That is the figure of a man who had a theoretical faith in his childhood and laid it away to keep.

Did you ever see a man sitting in his own orchard with the trees (the seed of which he planted with his own hand) pouring down their ripened fruit upon him, and he and his children and his grandchildren rejoicing in its beauty? That is the picture of a man who took the seed of truth and planted it, and now he is sitting under the boughs that overarch him, the legitimate growth and development of the seed which, being planted as living seed, goes into the ground and then grows up from the ground to make his days happy and his life full of joy and of usefulness. Phillips Brooks, I think it is, quotes somebody as saying that "a man ought to make his faith as a bird makes her nest—for a year at a time." You may do that, if you choose, and the boughs of your life may be filled with last year's birds' nests; but

as for me, I propose to build like the pyramids, so that I shall have something broad enough to lift its capstone to the heavens, so that I shall have amplitude and solidity. That is faith in the living God.

The next, and final, thing about it is that a faith that is worth the keeping is one that must translate itself into human action. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." You may tell me what you believe, but I will tell you what your faith is by your act. You may write me down your creed, but I will follow your footsteps to the market-place, and I will discount the creed you have written down by your acts before men and women. That is the measure of your faith. What are you doing? You say you believe in God. What makes you think you do? Have you done anything to bring God down to men? You say you believe in the brotherhood of the human race. What makes you think so? Are you doing anything to bind that brotherhood together and to show them the symbol of the Divine Elder Brother? You say that you

would that all men should come to God. If that were your wish would your feet be so leaden in the carrying of the message and your heart so cold to the spiritual need and suffering of the world? If a man has a cold heart, he is dead as far as his heart; and when a man has heart failure, he is in bad shape physically or religiously. When a man's heart has failed there is not much hope for him. When a man has no longer any heart for God and a desire to translate his faith into action, there is not much life to him. Now if we are to have a faith that is good enough to be kept, it must have those qualities which I have named. It must be wrought in us by a personal experience. It must translate itself into human responsibility, into human blessing, and live for the help of the world. Is it possible to have a faith like that? The answer is here. I covet for every man when the end of life shall come that he shall have such an experience as the apostle's, and that he may say at the last: "I am ready to go, for I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

Have you a faith that is worth keeping? If you have, hold fast to it. It is a great thing to believe in something. There are some men who do not say they believe in anything. Years ago Robert G. Ingersoll had a funeral service over his brother, and the saddest wail that ever went up from the lips of a master of English was the wail of that agnostic as he laid his darling brother in the grave. He said that "every life, no matter how beautiful it is, must end at last in shipwreck; and it may be best just at the sunniest hour of all the voyage that the ship should strike upon a rock and the waters roll over a sunken craft." John Bunyan did not know anything like that. His was a character curiously different. Let me read to you how he came out, in the last page of that marvelous story, "The Pilgrim's Progress." Here is the story of Mr. Standfast. He says:

"I see myself now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I am coming now to see that head that was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spit upon for me. I have for-

merly lived by hearsay and faith; but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there I covet to set my feet, too. His name has been to me a civet-box; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet; His countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His word I did use to gather for my food, and for my antidotes against my faintings. He has held me, and I have kept me from mine iniquities; yea, my steps hath He strengthened in His way."

"Now while he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed; his strong man bowed under him; and after he had said, 'Take me, for I come unto Thee,' he ceased to be seen of them. But glorious it was to see how the upper region was filled with the horses and chariots, with trumpeters and pipers, with singers and players on stringed instruments, to welcome the pilgrims as they went up, and

followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the city."

Such a close I covet for every Christian life. You may not keep your money—somebody may steal it from you. You may not keep your reputation—somebody may filch you of your good name. But there is one thing that you may keep. "I have kept the faith," will be the most glorious statement of a finished and successful life. Somewhere the wintry air is sifting in at the chamber where you will breathe your last. Somewhere the dry grasses of the spring are nodding over the ground where the green sward will be broken for your last resting-place. Whether you have accomplished much or little, I do not know; but I covet for you, as I covet for myself, that in that upper chamber, "where the good man meets his fate," we may, each of us, be able to say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

VII

THE CREED OF EXPERIENCE

The man answered and said unto them, Why this is a marvelous thing that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.—JOHN ix. 30.

YOU remember the old nursery story of the knights at the crossroads gazing from opposite sides at the statue with the uplifted shield. One knight spoke of the splendor of the golden shield and the other, while admiring the beauty of the shield, corrects the mistake of the first and reminds him that it is a silver shield. The first reaffirms his former statement and so hot does the argument become that they fall to blows. When the fight is over each one finds himself on the opposite side of the shield from where he first stood, and each is discouraged to find that he is wrong; for he of the silver shield finds that the other side was gold, while he of the gold finds the other side is silver. The

simple story teaches that in matters of fact the point of view is the most important point in the question.

In the incident from which my text is taken there is a most interesting contention concerning the claims of Christ. The parties in the debate are two. On the one side professors of theology, learned and adroit men. They have all the prophecies concerning the Messiah at their fingers' end. On the other side is a humble man, with the dull mind of the ordinary man of toil and uncultivated intellectual life. He can not follow the arguments or even understand the meaning of the words they use. The first denounce the claims of Jesus as unfounded and proceed to vilify His character. The other defends Him with all his might. But neither side does the other any good, for they look at the question from opposite standpoints. The Pharisees measure the claim of this claimant by the principles which have been current among them for centuries, and he does not meet their conditions. Another heinous offense is that he does not agree with them as to the Sabbath and other

serious matters. It is the poor fellow's turn to answer. What can he say?

Nothing from their standpoint, but from his own standpoint he is irresistible. He was born in darkness, and in darkness he has lived. He has felt the sun, but he never saw it. He has heard the birds, but never wondered at their glorious plumage. He has smelled the fragrance of the flowers, but he never saw them in their dress of purple and gold, nor beheld them lift up their white chalices for heaven's dew. He never saw a human smile; he never watched the love-light in a human face, nor looked into the depths of a mother's transcendent love. He has walked all his life in the darkness of the inner prison, but this man came and opened his door. He led him into the sunlight, opened his eyes to the vision of love in a human face and loveliness throughout the world. In face of that, what did he care about the speculations of the Pharisees? He can not reply in kind to the base insinuations of the critics, but he "has at them" after another fashion. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I can not

tell, but this I know—that whereas I was once blind, I now see."

"Here in this incident," as Starr King used to say, "we see a practical solution of the claims of Christ set against speculative doubt of those claims, and this dispute between the blind man and the Pharisee is a symbol of what often happens in the world. It would be easy to find men now who have doubts concerning Christianity born of intellectual inquiry which they find it impossible to appease; while there is another class of persons who feel a confidence in Christianity born of inward experience which it would be impossible to overthrow." Now, these two men will not be of much help to each other so long as they maintain their present attitude. Each speaks to the other in an unknown tongue. The one does not believe the Bible; whereas the other thinks only of the wonders that have been wrought in him, and that makes all other miracles possible to his thought. One is not sure as to the verity of the historic Christ; the other will affirm that he met Him as St. Paul did, and for evidence

points to his opened eyes. One has doubts about the Gospel records; the other finds in them nourishment for his soul and says they are spirit and life. One waits for the last dictum of the critics to settle his mind; the other strengthens his faith by the daily answers that are vouchsafed to Christian prayer. "One questions from a darkened intellect; the other answers from a sunlit soul." Surrounded by his philosophic doubts one says sadly, "As for this man Jesus, I know not from whence He is." The other replies, "Why herein is a marvelous thing, that you know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes." It is plain that there are two lines of evidence distinctly apart from each other, and neither of them will meet the conditions of the other. One is addrest to the intellect; the other is addrest to the soul. One is the historical; the other is the spiritual. A person who examines the historical proofs and finds them sufficient to satisfy his mind—and they have satisfied the greatest minds—is a believer in the facts of Christian history. And then there are the

great spiritual laws of the Gospel with its relation to the soul and its sublime offers of pardon and peace. The one who has felt them is a believer in the essence and vital truth of the Gospel. Historical evidence is required to settle historical questions, and spiritual evidence is necessary to settle spiritual questions.

I can not insist too much on this law. So many are approaching the spiritual from the standpoint of the purely historical. It will avail them as little as it availed the Pharisees. The higher law is the spiritual law. Historical evidence is not to be despised, and it forms a good support to the spiritual, but he who thinks that it takes the place of the spiritual is mistaken. The historical is to be studied secondarily. Paul was not led to change his position by a restudy of the evidence pointing to Christ as the Messiah. His spiritual nature was first aroused, and then he was led to change his views historically. In his own arguments he always placed first his own experience. "If a man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine"; so the first way to his-

torical assurance lies across the field of spiritual knowledge.

I would not speak against the value of historical evidence. If that were not credible, the influence of that fact would work serious harm to the Christian faith. But I call your attention to what to me is a matter of great force. In the nature of things, the argument from the person of Christ in its historical influence grows less the farther we are removed from it. The miracles of nineteen hundred years ago would have been most convincing in the age that saw them. The impression of them must of necessity diminish with the passing years. If this be true—and the historical evidences so-called are of greatest value—then the first century was the most fortunate and we are the most to be commiserated, and those who come after us will be the possessors of rapidly diminishing evidences. But so far from the evidences of Christianity becoming less powerful, history shows that they have multiplied in number and power with the march of the centuries. They were never so strong as they are to-day. This is be-

cause each man has had his own evidence without going back a thousand years. In his own heart has been the undisputable witness of the reality of Christ's power and the nobility of His character, and he has himself become an evidence to others that can not be overthrown or argued against.

Here is a fact to which I invite your thought: The ordinary investigation of men does not touch the heart of the Christian religion—it only plays around the history of it. It does not pretend to touch the facts; it only assails the record of the facts. Thousands of the noblest Christians in all the ages never investigated the facts of the Bible from the historic standpoint. They had the testimony for the Christian religion in their own hearts and fulfilled the Master's words: "He that believeth hath the witness in himself."

The supreme test of every religion must be in its effects. What does it do for and in those who possess it? There are many of your friends and thousands of men of tried character who affirm that this religion has enabled them to overcome evil

habits and base passions; that it has opened vistas of truth never seen before; that it has taken the bitterness out of sorrow and the sting out of death.

These are admitted facts. Is it possible that a religion which does such good is itself bad,—that it is founded either on a falsehood or a delusion? Do you affirm the historical evidence incomplete, the record unsatisfactory, the authenticity and credibility of the Bible account marred, the life and purpose of Christ in history doubtful? The whole world will turn to you and say, "Why here is a marvel. Ye know not where He is, and yet He hath opened our eyes!" It is not long since a converted Jewish rabbi struck his fellows dumb by saying: "You affirm that all the great saints and the great men in your history have been the subject of prophecy, but you deny the relation of these prophecies to Christ; so you are face to face with the fact that the man who has moved the world more than all others of our race put together and who is going to still greater triumphs was never seen by our prophets and was passed by in silence

by our seers. This is a marvel, that He was unknown and yet hath saved a world!"

I appeal to the evidence of Christianity which is furnished by the principles for which it stands. These are the principles of brotherhood. It hates slavery. It believes in equality. It holds the rich and poor with even hand. It believes in service. Its founder came to minister. "He that would be the first among you, let him be servant." It stands for the outcast and the helpless. It is the mother of hope, the comforter of sorrow, the chief advocate and defender of the immortal life. What other system has such a record?

Moreover, Christianity has stood for intellectual freedom and is the founder of the school. It kindled the fires of the Renaissance and stirred the hearts of the humanists. It has set up the hospital and the asylum. When it came there was not a hospital from the Euphrates to the Pillars of Hercules. It is the inspiration of all charitable institutions. And best of all, it is the mother of the Christian Church, with all the blessed influences

that have gone forth from her to help the poor and to fight the battles of the defenseless and opprest.

But Christianity is chiefly to be judged by the men it has given to the world. It matches your Plato with a Paul, your Pythagoras with a Peter. It surpasses the victories of Roman consuls by those of Galilean fishermen. For an Alexander it gives us a Luther; for the conquests of Cæsar the triumphs of Howard and Clarkson; for knights in armor who pillaged and killed, humble peasants who fed the hungry and healed the wounded; for men moved by the lust of conquest, men moved by the love of God and men. All these have had their inspiration from Him who passed across a narrow strip of an obscure and subject land. I leave you to answer if you can the blind man's homely argument: "Why here is a man you know not whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes."

If, therefore, you have doubts as regards Christ's power and character, I will tell you how to settle them. You want something other than cold, historical data.

That settles no facts—it only concerns itself with their records. You will need spiritual arguments, as I have said, to settle spiritual truth.

You will never have faith in Christ until you submit your heart to Him who opens blind eyes, unstops deaf ears, makes lepers clean. Every prayer that goes to Him, every spiritual aspiration of the soul, every honest act in harmony with that spirit will strengthen your conviction of its reality and its power. Some of you are saying, "I do not see this." Of course not. It is spiritually discerned. I will waive all other arguments when you are able to offer this proof of Christ's divinity: "He hath opened mine eyes." It is a reasonable thing when I ask every man to make the test; and I am ready to venture the verity of the whole system of Christianity on the outcome of an honest trial.

VIII

LIFE THROUGH CHRIST

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—I. Cor. xv. 22. *And ye are complete in him.*—Col. ii. 10.

It was my privilege recently to carry these words as a holy and comforting promise to the dying bed of one upon whom a critical operation had proven unsuccessful, and to see the evidence of their truth in the passing of a Christian soul into the great glory which awaits him who journeys with the blessed Christ. The immortal life through Christ never seemed so certain to me as it does now. I wish, however, to use my text in a spiritual sense, which is the earthly counterpart of the heavenly resurrection. It is just in proportion as we are in Christ that we live. The soul gains its completeness, that which satisfied its

longing and is the answer to its being, only by finding Christ.

Much has been made in the Christian religion of the sin of Adam. He has been represented as the perfect being and we speak of his sin and the following transgressions as the fall of man. A little reflection will convince us that Adam is not entitled to either the praise or the blame that the theologians accord him. Whatever perfection Adam had it was certainly not the perfection which speaks of struggle and consequent attainment. It was a perfection put upon him and not one wrought out by him, hence one in which he had no share and deserved no credit. Henry Drummond has a book on the "Ascent of Man," and I quite incline to the idea that there has been progress through the ages. I would not go back to the perfection of Adam if I could, any more than I would go back to the innocence of a child in the cradle. I would far rather have the experience of sin and defeat, if I might also have the experience of salvation from sin by Jesus Christ my Savior.

Then, too, the moral culpability of sin presents itself. Men are quite inclined to blame Adam for their shortcomings. I answer, Adam's sin is no more to me than the sin of any other man whom I never knew. Instead of condemning me it constitutes my chief claim on divine mercy. I had nothing to do with Adam's sin and therefore I have no moral culpability for it and no remorse because of it. Guilt is the personal blameworthiness that follows the commission of sin. But it must be the person in question who committed the sin, and under conditions inexcusable. So my condemnation is not that I was born into the world of sinful parents. That was not my fault, for my opinion even was not asked, much less my consent. The condemnation comes to me not because of Adam's choice but because of my own choice and that made when I knew I could have made and ought to have made a different and better one. The fact then remains beyond question that we are only responsible for what we have done, but we *are* responsible for that. The old affirmation, "In Adam's fall we sinned all,"

is not true. Guilt goes with sin, and I am guiltless for all the evil of the world except what I have committed.

It is true that created with a capacity for holy things, with a nature which is religious, I have received from my ancestors certain inclinations toward both good and evil. But neither heredity nor environment is finally to determine my stand. I must stand or fall by my own voluntary choices. I am not a fatalist. I believe in free will, and because of that I preach about the nature, the danger, and the penalty of sin. And while I am on this matter let me say that the idea that God arbitrarily punishes sin is only a small part of the truth.

Many elements enter into the penalty of sin: a condemning conscience; the disapproval of a holy and loving God; moral deterioration; the consequences of sin; the nemesis of transgression; the tendency to permanency. Dr. W. N. Clark has well said in his "Outlines of Theology": "It may be God sometimes adds penalty to the natural outcome of sin, but the feeling that special intervention of God is neces-

sary for punishing sin rests upon inadequate conceptions of the retribution that sin will bring if it works out its consequences. If sin is left to work out its own nature, it will effect complete and final ruin for him who makes it his own."

There is now to be faced a new and most important fact in the problem of the soul. When God makes a mountain or a sea or a sun, it is complete and needs no change. But the soul, or the moral nature, is not created that way. That is to grow, to be unfolded by its own struggle and volition into the great and holy thing that is potentially its scope. God Himself can not create a saint. The most He can do is to help that soul to develop its own saintliness. And on the other hand no man can become a saint unless he has help from above. He who supplies sun and air and rain for the plant must supply nourishment and atmosphere and sun for the soul that is lifting helpless hands and crying for the light. There is a world of holy philosophy in that passage of holy writ: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trem-

bling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Not a man by himself, or God by Himself, but man and God is the true unit of life and power. The soul, then, will not be complete until it takes Christ by a full and voluntary choice.

We may ask ourselves how and by what process is the soul complete. The soul was meant for joy and purity and love. Doctor Bushnell says: "No bee misses the shape of his cells, no bird of passage misses the direction of his flight, no plant aspiring toward the light misses the color and kind of its flower; no more will a soul as a being set for joy miss the state of absolutely full enjoyment, unless it is somehow incomplete, sweltering in some torment of negation or inbred disorder."

When, therefore, the soul does not produce the fruit which a soul ought to bear, when it does not present the form in which it was meant to appear, what is the trouble? This simply: it is not complete. Something has stopt or disturbed its growth, and that growth will never be full and normal until the obstacle is removed.

You might as well expect a fish to fulfil its life without the sea, or the bird to fulfil its life without the air, as for a soul to fulfil its life without God. A man can not perfect his own soul by his study and his plan. An hour with God is worth more than a college education. Father Taylor's homely illustration has great meaning: "As well expect a man to lift himself to the stars by his own boot-straps as to expect a soul to find the stars alone." One of our modern writers has used an illustration which to me is very forceful: A sponge must have the sea. It must let in and possess the sea, all the currents and tides and even the salt of it, drinking and swaying and feeding in its element, and then as being sea-like in its habit it fulfils its kind and is complete. So a soul must have the Infinite life for which it was made flowing through it, freshening and impelled by all its thrilling force. "The soul but gasps till the Infinite touches it, and then it lives."

How vast is the difference between man at his unaided best, and God using His resistless force! I see men busy at their

springs conveying the water to their homes, for their wells are dry. I see the city fathers in trepidation watching the falling of our reservoirs. I see the panting horses tugging their carts along our streets—thousands of them in a great city. I see every gardener and florist with his water-pot trying to nourish his drooping plants, and then I see God take a hand. His great sun pumps the water out of His great sea. The spaces of the heavens are filled with His battalions as He marshals the summer clouds. I hear the lightnings grounding their arms amid the mountains. God harnesses His winds to the misty chaldrons of the air; they clash above us, they dash themselves against the mountains, and city and hamlet and country are nourished in an hour. Millions upon millions in property is saved and millions of men drink the grateful draft. Every flower in the land looks up in gratitude with a tear-drop in its eye and the newspapers have great headlines, "The drought is broken! The crops are safe!" A nation has escaped starvation or bankruptcy.

How easily God did it! How foolish for a man to get out his little engine and run amuck with God's sun!

When men undertake to live a life that satisfies the soul without divine help they soon give up the unequal struggle. God must tell the soul its need. We are too ignorant to know. We are too clumsy to carve out the image which we may see. Christ becomes our example, and we are conscious of a power not our own that makes for righteousness when we surrender ourselves to His directing hand. In Him we know for the first time the thrill of the immortal life. The soul is conscious that its need is met. "I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness." There is no need which is not met; there are no longings which are not crowned with fruition. It is completeness for every soul—for the master and the servant, for the cultured and the ignorant, for the refined and the rough. His life is yours. Sin is banished. The thing for which you were made is accomplished. There is no loss which is not compensated in Christ. I know about human inequal-

ities. I know about human suffering and disappointment. I know the awful thing that Death is, and when I look at him from the human side I hate him. Twice to-day I have seen him triumph, but I know One who is mightier than he. I have seen the battle fought out this last week and it was a victory for the Man of Nazareth. The antidote for poverty and pain, the antidote for failure and doubt is Christ *in you.*

I offer to your restless heart the completeness of the soul as it is to be found alone in the Christian religion. Many of you have come to think of religion as a thing you can take or leave. To tell the truth, you have rather looked down upon those who have gone to the altar or given other evidence of their desire to have the pardon and peace of God and to develop that soul-life which they are conscious they possess. It has seemed like humbling yourself and you would not do it. Let me remind you that it is the part of true wisdom to be honest. The really wise man will acknowledge his ignorance and will seek one wiser than himself that he may

learn. Is there any triumph of soul with you? Is there any consciousness of God's approval? Any sense of great hopes that lift themselves to the sky? Anything beyond? If you are thirty-five years old your life is half over; what of the other half and the eternity beyond? Have you gained the sense of soul-completeness and does the future beckon you? Would you be at home among those who are complete in Christ? Some men grow arrogant through power and haughty by means of their own attainment. There is a pride of ability and scholarship, and even a temptation to the virtuous to say: I am holier than thou. But the blessed thing about Christ is that He is most anxious to help the most needy and may be touched as easily by the sinner as by the saint. To any seeker He reaches out a helping hand. He will not chide over your little worth nor your frequent failings; He will ask no question as to the past. He speaks sinners' forgiveness and offers help to those whom others despise. He knows where the faint embers burn and will kindle the flame. Let Him in!

II
THE GUIDANCE OF LIFE

I

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE'S CHOICE

By faith Moses when he was come to years refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.—HEBREWS xi. 24.

WE have recently dedicated a Hall of Fame, wherein are inscribed the names of the citizens of America whom we enroll among our immortals. Some of them are known the world over and their influence will be mighty in coming time. Others are local in their fame and some might question their right to such an exalted place. This chapter which I have read swings the door into a hall of fame wherein are written the names of the heroes of four millenniums. These are also of one nationality; heroes whose title was given by the High Court of heaven and stands to-day unimpeached. Those heroes long

since lost their local and national exclusiveness and for ages have belonged to all nations and will belong to all time. They were victors in that battle where immortal destinies are settled and the fight is won by reserves from heaven or hell. In this noble company of saints and martyrs we are to consider one who stands second to none in character and influence. The inspired hand which hangs up the name in this Valhalla hangs under it the record of what he did and why he did it. To this record I invite your attention.

Mythology has wondrous stories of gods and men, but nothing more thrilling than the birth and life of Moses. Incidents and accidents of birth and fortune are not wanting in other lives, but where is there a history surpassing his? Born a slave, under an edict of death; hidden in the long grasses and papyrus of the Nile; "it chanced" (eternal love that chance did guide) the fair Thermuthis, Pharaoh's daughter, parts the reeds and finds the tiny voyager in his willow basket. Measured by consequences, the mightiest vessel that ever sailed the Nile was that willow

basket with a baby for captain and crew. She names him Moses—the one drawn out. Borne to the palace the little slave is reared like a king's son. Egypt is the land of learning and the wisest of the Egyptians are the instructors of the child in Pharaoh's palace. He is apt and masterful, quick and deep in intellectual power. In science, history, philosophy, and law he sounds all the learning of his time. "He is learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." His writings remain to this day unchallenged in their clearness and power, and the laws he made and codified have become the foundation of the jurisprudence of the world. As a general he commanded an army of eight hundred thousand men for forty years after he was eighty years old, and he led four million men, women, and children out of slavery, maintained them in a desert for forty years, brought them into a land of fertility, and founded a nation which thirty centuries of oppression have not obliterated.

This is the man who made the choice I am to describe. If there was ever a man

able to make a wise choice, a man who could weigh the evidence and look to the end of a subject, it was Moses. When did he make the choice? Not when he was a boy and governed by impulses and emotions. Not when he was old and had used all that Egypt had to offer and had lost heart and strength. Not when he had fallen upon bitter times and was crusht, disappointed and forsaken. It was "when he was come to years." When the blood was hot in his veins. When he had attained to the fulness of his marvelous powers. When he was in the king's palace and knew what he had to give up. Thus, with everything that the highest civilization of his time could offer, at a period when he could weigh evidence without pressure of anger or disappointment, deliberately, as became a choice so important, without reserve he settled a question which was irrevocable and bound him to a nation of slaves, ignorant, prejudiced and bigoted; but he settled it gladly and, tho he got nothing out of it but a toilsome life and an unknown grave, it was the wisest choice he ever made.

Why did he make this choice? The record says because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. What was his reward? He was ejected from the palace and rejected by the slaves. The son of the Pharaohs spent a generation tending sheep. That was not a very easy life on the scarred and rocky sides of Sinai. But it was easier than trying to herd and shepherd the seething, fretting crowd of slaves that followed him down to the sea. And forty years he bore their folly and petulance. If they had done as he wished he might have spent the last forty years of his life on the sunny slopes where the grapes of Eschol grew; or in the rich Jordan valley he might have gotten a harvest growing spontaneously in the field—milk and honey and wine and oil. But the men for whom he left the palace were his drag and hindrance, and they never ceased their whining. More than once they would have stoned him to death. The stones were in their hands, and only that God killed them they would have killed him. But how did it all come out; what was the last chapter in the hero's

life? It was much like the chapters that went before.

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulcher,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the Angel of God upturned the sod
And laid the dead man there."

It takes a great man to go up to his Nebo to die and yet be calm and content; to look into a land which he can not enter; to conquer all opposition, and then, in the hour of triumph, to step down and let another win the laurels for his victory and the comfort for his pains. But that is often the way in human life. Most of the great men of the ages have died on Nebo. They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, but died like strangers and pilgrims. It takes a great soul to face uncomplainingly an hour like that.

"But had he not high honor,
The hillside for a pall,
To lie in state while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall;

"And the dark rock pines like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave;
And God's own hand in that lonely land
To lay him in the grave?"

If all the recompense of the reward was in outward victory we might question the wisdom of his choice, but that was really a small part of it. Many who speak of the choice of Moses refer the reward to the final recompense of the just in heaven. I have no quarrel with them. I believe in the resurrection and the life eternal. I believe that many of the mysteries of this life will be solved there and that it will have abundant compensation for all denials and toils in this life, but I am equally certain that the recompense of the reward comes also here and now. Let the business man be buoyed up by his hope of future success. Let the young man make his choice for a business life and go to his toil, having respect unto the recompense of his reward, for thus the cottage may be happier than the mansion and content dwell oftener in the hovels of the poor than in the palaces of the rich; but I am glad to proclaim that the choice which

Moses and men like him have made brings a reward that is never conditional nor long delayed. Some vessels we launched have never come to port. Some hopes we have nourished and lifted to blossom bore no fruit. But the choice which duty makes brings its reward without failure and its reward is adequate and full. Have you fathomed the mystery of it?

I had a friend who was invited to high office. Duties which seemed to be of God held him to an inferior place. Conscientiously he weighed the matter and decided it in harmony with duty. His after years brought him pain and loss because of that choice. Office and emoluments passed him by, and so he died. I commented bitterly on it to a friend, but he answered me wisely, "He came to his throne and his crown when he decided to do the thing that duty asked and you need waste no sympathy upon him." Such crowns outlast the stars and outshine them.

This leads me to ask, What was the choice of Moses? It was to stand on God's side; to be numbered with those who shared the precious faith of Abraham, the

friend of God. It was better to be a slave and to be God's than to be a prince and an idolater. He believed in a Messiah who should redeem the world. That faith he heard from the Hebrew mother-nurse who followed him to the palace. See what a mother can do. The first three years of a child's life are the most important. His teachers talked of Isis and Osiris, of the white ram of Ammon and the bull Apis; but his mother talked of the Messiah and the deliverance sure to come, and so he turned away from the elegance of the court, from the voluptuous scene of a heathen worship and cast in his lot with the people of God, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He did it with his eyes open. He knew what afflictions would come to him, but he knew that God, with affliction, was better than the pleasures of sin. His choice was to be and to do instead of to enjoy. He must sink his own pleasure out of sight before a great mission. Your choice is the same.

You talk to me about giving up the things I love, and you would shut me from

friendship and enjoyment and earthly success. Are you sure that you understand that? There is a deep philosophy in this choice of Moses. It is the enduring as against the fleeting; the spiritual as against the secular, when these become rival claims. We can not and should not try to stifle the love of nature nor of friends. We are members of society: we must be neighborly. We are citizens: we must be patriotic. We must improve mind and body. We are to use the world and not to abuse it. The flesh is innocent; it is the lust of the flesh which is sin. Money is a blessing; it is the love of money which ruins. Life is a noble thing; it is the pride of life which builds barriers against the soul. Does this life, which now is, so fill your soul that you think not of the life to come? A great philosopher looked upon his neighbor's elegance in art and architecture, at his tapestries and treasures, and then said: "Ah, Davy, this is what makes a death-bed terrible." Which would you choose to-day, the reproach of Christ or the riches of a Carnegie; or to put it a little closer and clearer, would you

put Christian life before your business life, your worship before your pleasure?

It was the life choice of Moses, choice of "the reproach of Christ," a life of sacrifice, and Nebo's solitary sepulcher that led this writer of a later day to enroll him in this remarkable list of those who make up the roll of faith and fame.

The apostle reads off the list until his soul is fairly ablaze with the splendor of the names and their achievements; his martial spirit is kindled, and he says: "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," made strong by the Man who climbed by the cross to the throne. There are no regrets that come to us from these who so wisely chose. Their cup of blessing, long since full, overflows forever. Still men read their record and are inspired for battle. The humble soldier on every battle-field is nerved to do his best. Tho dead, they speak to us and urge us on. Ages yet to come will sound their glories and follow

their example. The lovers of pleasure long since were covered by the waves of oblivion, but the lovers of God shine down the ages and these are the light of the world. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.

II

FROM SWEARER TO PREACHER

And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.—MATT. xxvi. 72.

THERE are some men who are as sensitive to their surroundings as a barometer to the atmosphere. They hold any perfume or any taint through which they pass. Like a sponge they take up whatever they touch. There is another class akin to this who are the subjects of their own moods. From causes external or internal, open or occult, the mood is on and the man is its victim. It is largely this class of people that make up the most aggressive of both the positive and negative forces of society. They are not the men for a siege; they are the men for a charge —a quick, sharp dash into the enemies' country, to take a fort in hot blood. They may be narrow, but like any metal that is narrow enough, they have an edge to them

and go crashing like a battle-ax through all opposition. They are the men for Tennyson's Light Brigade, for Sheridan's Reserve at Winchester, or for a dash up San Juan Hill. In moral and religious life they are the men who make reformers. They see things clearly and feel things intensely. They are impetuous and illy brook restraint. Some men are like a placid lake of almost fathomless depths, whose clear waters may be drawn upon without stint; but these are a mountain stream. They may bear riches untold to the open sea or they may tear up bridges and lay waste fertile meadows. They are an engine with the governor tied down; a locomotive with the throttle wide open and the engineer away. Everything depends upon the fires within.

This is the sort of a man that here fronts us. Peter the impetuous, the same man who upbraided the Master because He said they all should forsake Him, and affirmed that if everybody on earth was offended because of Him Peter would not be. "Tho I should die with thee yet will I not deny thee," said the impetuous

man. How little we know what we will do when the temptation is on us, and for that reason it behooves every honest soul to get every possible help. This is the man who drew a sword to defend his Master and cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, but his zeal for Christ seems to have gone out with that stroke. He was strong when the voice of Jesus was in his ears and His presence felt, but when hostile torches were in the air and it was ten to one against the little band in the garden, it was quite another thing. It is easy to go with the crowd, to shout hosannas when a thousand voices join us in the chorus, but the rough hand of opposition or the hiss of the scourge has silenced many a man. It scattered the disciples that night, and the timid Peter fled with the remainder.

The next record of him is a sad one. "But Peter followed him afar off into the high priest's palace and went in and sat with the servants to see the end." For a man who is made by his environment that is a fatal place. For a man like Peter to follow afar off is to invite apostasy.

He must be one thing or another—an earnest saint or an earnest sinner. If any man ought to have stood by Jesus it was Peter. Jesus had loved him and prayed for him; He had honored him with discipleship; He had taken him into the inner circle of His friends and showed him His transfigured glory. But now Peter is either afraid or ashamed to be found in His company. He has forgotten all his benefits. He ignores all Jesus has done for him, and becomes an ingrate of the darkest type. The trouble with Peter is, he is not only afar off, but he is in bad company; that is always the trouble with the man who gets away from God. Just in proportion as he becomes indifferent to his duty will he become interested in those who are careless like himself, and less and less will he associate with the devoted and holy.

The strength of Peter, like that of every other impetuous, impressionable man, was in good associates. When these are gone his good purposes fail, and he goes to pieces at the first chance. A little maid puts the stout man to flight. A sneer will sometimes overpower a man who had

faced a whole regiment unmoved. Another girl repeats the charge of the first: "Thou wast with the Galilean." A third says: "Don't deny it. Your very speech condemns you." A kinsman of the man whose ear he cut off says: "I saw you in the garden." Peter is cornered. He tries to lie out of it. It is of no use. In his desperation, from being a liar he becomes a blasphemer. So does one sin lead to another in a downward course.

Of all the sins in which men engage, the one absolutely without excuse is profanity. Every man who swears declares himself, so far as the matter at hand is concerned, to be without self-control, without argument, without character. Apart from all consideration of its sinfulness in the sight of God and its offense against the law of the land, it is the most abjectly puerile thing that an able-bodied man ever does. If a man swears because he can not restrain himself and does it in a passion, he ought to be put under a guardian or under bonds to keep the peace. The same lack of control would lead him to murder, if impulse pointed

that way. Many men swear because they are at the end of their argument and feel themselves worsted, and in their desperation they call on God for dire punishment against those who have probed to the bottom of their knowledge and have opened up the fathomless abyss of their ignorance. More study and reflection will give such people more arguments for any cause and more sense than to so demean themselves as to make thinking people disgusted with them, and enter themselves as candidates for any vacant room in a lunatic asylum.

If a man swears thinking to add to the force of his words and make them believed when otherwise they might be doubted, he virtually says that his character is such that people may be expected to doubt his word and only an appeal to God himself is strong enough to give currency to his statement. A man of that character is the last man to appeal to God for vindication, and no one would believe him after his appeal who did not believe him before. If a man tells the truth he needs no vain appeal to God,

and even in courts of justice where a solemn oath is taken it is well known that a man who will not tell the truth of his own accord will not do it under oath. If a swearer means what he says he ought to be immediately imprisoned behind the stoutest bars, for his heart is blacker than a murderer's. The murderer's wrath is over when his victim falls into the grave, but the swearer is not satisfied until he has called upon his victim the wrath of God for all eternity. If he does not mean what he says, and I hope I may say, of course, he does not, he is false to himself and dishonest before God and men and ought to be as much ashamed of it as he would be if caught in any other lie. If a man steals he does it to enrich himself; if he commits any other crime it is usually that he may reap some selfish advantage; but the man who breaks the third commandment does it not only without the hope of gain to himself, but with the certain knowledge that he loses by so doing the respect of all good people and his own self-respect—that he breaks the laws of the land and of all decent society, and

brings upon himself the condemnation of God.

Peter's sin was a grievous one, and grievously did he suffer for it; but while we accuse him let us not forget there are greater sinners among us. Peter denied Christ to save his life, but many a man in our time denies him for an hour of pleasure or a few dollars of gain. I am glad the record does not stop here. Peter caught the eye of his Master. It was only a look, but it broke his heart. The next day Christ took Peter's sin to the cross, and atoned for it by his own death. After his resurrection his first tender message of hope and forgiveness was sent to that same Peter.

It is fifty days later. Peter has seen his Master and had full forgiveness from his own lips. At the Lord's command he waits with one hundred and nineteen others to receive power. It comes upon them all, and the noise of it is sounded abroad. And now in sight of Calvary, the marks of the Savior's blood still red upon the rocks, facing bloody Jews, angry priests, rough soldiers, and the reckless

mob, a man we have seen before stands up to speak. He faces them all without a tremor, fire in his eye, a quenchless zeal in his soul. Was ever a scene more thrilling? He charges them with the death of the Son of God. He breaks down their prejudices and lashes their consciences until they cry: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and by the thousands they fall before the power of God sending home the preacher's words. This is the blasphemer whom the mercy and power of God has made the matchless preacher. What changes God can make in a soul surrendered to him! Did this man ever grow timid again? No; the transforming power of grace had made a coward a hero, a feeble man become as stable as a rock, even in the face of death. Tradition has it that they led him outside the walls of Rome to crucify him as they had crucified his Master a generation before, but he said he was not worthy of such a form of death as came to his Lord, and asked that he might be crucified with his head pointing downward. The same tradition makes the grandest of cathe-

drals his mausoleum. I never look upon the dome of St. Peter's that I do not think of the backslider Peter, who became the mouthpiece of God. I marvel at what God can do with any life that is fully surrendered to Him, and I have hope in His mercy both for myself and other men.

III

SHIRKING A GREAT DUTY

And the Lord answered, Behold he hath hid himself among the stuff.
—I. Sam. x. 22.

Samson, Saul, Absalom, and Solomon are evidences that it takes more than a stout arm, a fine figure, a handsome face, or a full head to make a man from God's standpoint or a success from the standpoint of thoughtful men. It arouses one's contempt to see a big man undertaking small and mean things. Some things we can excuse in a little man which are an unpardonable sin for a big man. We can forgive Zaccheus for climbing a tree, but we can not forgive Saul for getting into a hole and pulling the camp luggage after him. Before we get him out, now that we know where he is, let me refresh your memory about him.

In the first place I do not like his ancestry. His father was a man of wealth and

power, but he and his son had no thought about the things that counted most in Israel, or anywhere else. They were so busy breeding asses that they paid no attention to the hope of Israel and the God that had made their nation what it was. As long as Samuel had ruled in the land and been God's representative Saul never heard of him and so never knew him when he met him. With all his going up and down in the land Kish never said: "Come, my son, the Lord's prophet is going to pass this way. Let us listen to his words and hear his judgments." Put your children in the way of hearing God's prophets and go that way yourself. But no, Kish was too busy with his stock farm. He never went to church Sunday. He wanted to look his farm over. He cared more for his asses and their colts than he did for the tabernacle or the prophet. Sunday was a good time to plan and figure up.

The descendants of Kish have settled on most of the streets of New York and Brooklyn. They are the men who are too busy six days of the week to think of their

souls. And on the seventh day they say, "I am too tired to go to church; get me the Sunday newspaper." And so they grow sodden by the very mercies of God. Their daughters are weaned from good things; their sons grow worldly, hard, and wicked. If the fathers have means the daughters are the prey of designing men. They run away from home to come back disgraced and to live as a burden in the old home. They have no comfort from noble living or high thinking. O Kish, breeder of asses, let me show you your boy! I passed over Gilboa and marked well the place where he fell. A sword went through his heart; not the sword of the Philistine but his own sword, for he fell upon it. And there where the plain drops toward the Jordan, the Philistines fastened upon the walls of Beth-shan his headless body and hung up his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth. The best thing I can wish for many a father and mother is that they may not be alive to read the black head-lines which will tell the shame of those whose bodies they nourished, but whose souls they polluted

and starved to death in their own parlors.

But enough of Kish. Let us find his son. I confess he is an enigma to me. Some things about him please me and others make me ashamed of him and righteously angry with him. Doctor Whyte quotes Newman as saying that Saul's character is so obscure that after three attempts he gave up preaching upon it. Now Saul had hidden himself so securely that he could not be found until the Lord told them where to look. At last they bring him forth. A small man may undertake small business with little comment, but think of pulling the great Saul out from his hiding-place in the midst of the provender and the stuff. You say the reason was he was too modest. Perhaps so. But it is an awful thing for a man to be so modest as that when he stands face to face with his life-work. Judging from the after course of his life his action was the action of a man who shrank from toil. To be King of Israel at that time was not an easy thing. There were battles to fight, foes outside, and foes inside that must be met, and he had much to lose and

little to gain. One had almost as soon be president of a South American republic.

He was the creature of impulse. Today he prophesies and it comes to be a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" And a little later he will be hurling javelins at his best friend. But of those years I can not speak. He had hid himself among the stuff. He had no reliance on God, nor had he the sense of being God's man. He was as far as possible removed from Moses or Joshua or Samuel or David.

The spirit which moved Saul actuates many splendid young men who have in them the making of a better king than Saul over a more important kingdom. They are hiding themselves among the stuff. When I see a young man who has a capacity for noble endeavor, who is called to a kingdom in a land where he may be God's chosen man for a great work, I can not bear to see him hide himself in the stuff. But here they are. They are immersed in business. They are burning the candle at both ends, early and late. You remember in Bunyan's allegory the

man with the muck-rake—raking together straws and sticks while an angel is holding a crown of gold over his head, but he will not look up. Take along what worldly interests you may, but take them as luggage and keep your soul out of them. You are a king, not a cow-herder. Do not shirk your duty. He that knoweth it and doeth it not shall be beaten with many stripes. Saul knew what his destiny was and so do you. What would have happened in America if Washington and Franklin and Lincoln and Garrison had shirked their duty? What would have happened if Asbury and Lee and Whitfield and Barbara Heck had shirked? It is small business for a young man to hide in the stuff, and you are doing that when you spend your money and your evenings in such company as many have too frequently done.

Do not belittle yourself. Do not put the form of a giant into the occupation of a mule boy. If anybody can afford to spend his time aimlessly and uselessly it is not you. God has called you and you have heard His call. You know what He

designs you for. You have felt a great hope and a great purpose but have been dallying along among the stuff. Young lady, what frivolous things have made up too large a portion of your purposes and your time! Royal opportunities are yours. Not to be the bride of a ruined scion of a helpless house, but to be queen by your own right. Come out from the stuff.

But God knew where Saul was. He could no more hide from God in the stuff than Jonah could hide from God in the hold of a coaster. The city with all its publicity is an excellent place to hide. Wicked men come here to hide from their crimes and it is the best place to hide among the stuff for a man who is shrinking a great duty. I fancy I am talking to some such. When the sacred and solemn obligations of a sovereign citizen are calling men to the ballot-box on election day, many an American king hides among the worthless baggage of selfish pleasure or of civil indifference. They are on the golf links, or taking a shooting trip to the Chesapeake. Not until God scourges them with whips can they be dragged out to

do the duties that belong to a citizen of the Republic. They hide among the stuff while thieves and grafters elect their candidates to rule and rob the people. They are fleeing from the face of God and duty. They think they have hidden themselves, but really they have not. Cain could not hide from God; neither could Elijah, nor David, nor Annanias, nor can you. God is calling you to your kingdom —a great duty, a great opportunity. You remember how Victoria came to her throne and you know the splendor of her reign. Are you in the church—a member of God's chosen people and are hiding yourself among the stuff? Come out of your hiding. Go to your coronation and to your mission. Let the anointing oil be poured upon your head by God's prophet and make a great kingdom for yourself.

So when I see a man too busy in secular concerns to care for spiritual affairs, I say, Saul hiding himself in the baggage.

I am speaking to hundreds of students in school and college. To you I make my appeal. You have splendid opportunities. The wealth of the world's intellectual life

is within your reach, but you are to use it for a great purpose and not for selfish ends. Here are men who have inherited large estates and social prestige. If you run in a silly round of dinners and clubs and all the inane accessories of so-called society life it will appear at the last that you have hidden yourself in your belongings and have wasted your thought on the valueless stuff of existence instead of giving yourself to guarding the jewel, life.

What is the outlook there in the baggage? Get out of it, O king!

"The world is too much with us: late and soon.
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see of nature that is ours:
We have given our hearts away a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything we are out of tune.
It moves us not, great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

Only the man who pays attention to duty will find himself and his kingdom. These are the men who move and save this world. Scotsmen will tell you how this thought redeemed their land in the days of the Covenanters. The soldiers are fastening a head upon the Netherbow. It is the head of James Guthrie, minister of Sterling. They put it up where all Scotland could see it—there on the arch between High Street and Canongate. As he mounted the scaffold there was such dignity upon his face that the bystanders said they "had not seen more of God at the most solemn communion." In far-carrying tones he cried: "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One, I shall not die!" Just before the swift stroke of the executioner he lifted the napkin from his face and cried: "The Covenants, the Covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving!" There is a weird tradition of a ruddy drop that dript from that gory head upon the Earl of Middleton's carriage and all the nobleman's servants could not wash it away. But there is a true story of more pathetic memory—

a story of little William Guthrie, the martyr's four-year-old boy. It was a sore and heavy thing to be a Covenanter's child and the poor boy would go into the street to study his father's face and then lock himself in his room. To him there was no head so wreathed in beauty as that one kissed of God by sun and rain, and the childhood of Scotland gazing upon it grew into a generation that feared God and wrought righteousness.

The only man who really lives is the man who will do his duty if it costs his life. That is a good message for us to hear in a time when men who are called to be kings hide themselves in the stuff. God is calling. It is time to leave the stuff for service—and a crown.

IV

AT THE GATE OF SODOM

And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.—GEN. xix. i.

THE story of Lot reads like the familiar history of human experience in the twentieth century. Here is a country boy in the city. He has run the same race which thousands run in New York. If he has not actually embraced vice to his own heart he has seen it, pitied it, and now endures it. He had good training, for he was the nephew and companion of Abraham. With him he came out from the land of his fathers and ventured his life and fortune. Together they set up their altars and worshiped Jehovah. As long as Lot kept with Abraham he prospered in soul and body. He was like many a man in our time—he took form and color from his surroundings. He was not a man of strong character; he was by nature a follower and not a leader. The Bible dis-

closed that in a brief sentence more than once repeated: "And Lot went with him." Abraham was a man of power and will and Lot readily gave assent to his plans. When any man realizes that he has a nature like Lot the first thing for him to do is to put himself in touch with a nature stronger and better than his own that he may reap the advantage of a noble leadership and be kept from the evil into which other companions might lead him. The epitome of many a successful life is found in four words: I had a friend.

When their flocks and herds had greatly multiplied and dissension arose among their servants over water and pasturage, Abraham gives Lot his choice of territory. Lot chose like a selfish man. Nothing counted with him but present and material good. He saw the valley of the river Jordan. There was water in abundance. It was fruited like the garden of the Lord. There was rich and ample pasturage for all his herd, and there was a good market near at hand. And he said, What more can a man want? To be sure this land was near Sodom and Sodom was a very wicked

city, but I presume he said: "I'll risk that. What I am after is the money. Sodom is a good market and I need not trouble myself about its wickedness." So he "pitched his tent toward Sodom." I wish he had faced his tent the other way. If it had opened to the west instead of the south, and if when he lifted the door he could have seen the smoke of Abraham's morning sacrifice curling heavenward, it might have sent him to his own knees and all would have been well. As it was the sight of the sin of Sodom was before him and his children morning, noon, and night and they grew familiar with it.

It was not long, I fancy, until his children said: "You are too rich to live out here in a black tent. Men of means live in the city, and that is the place for us. We like the young people of Sodom and we do not believe they are so bad as they are painted. There is no society for us here. Let us go to the city." When the family had made up its mind to go, "Lot went also." Now he is a citizen of Sodom. Being a man of family and means, he is advanced by the people to be one of the

city fathers and now he sits at the gate among the principal men. I presume Lot and his family congratulated themselves upon their success and his neighbors called him a far-sighted man, but a shorter-sighted man never lived. The far-sighted man is that old Hebrew among the hills. His vision took in "the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." Lot's children doubtless made fun of him, laughed at his old-fashioned customs and homespun ways; but when they are in trouble and are captured by heathen kings it is this same Abraham who rescues them and the people of Sodom from their captors and asks nothing in return. It is quite the fashion with us for the gay and frivolous to laugh at the sober life and simple joys of the men of God, but they are glad enough to avail themselves of their help in time of trouble and to no one do they turn with such confidence in their distress as to these very men who would not be turned from their Christian devotion by joke or taunt.

Lot chose rich fields, sure honors—and

Sodom, and when he made that choice he chose unwittingly the loss of all property, position, and friends and the death or unspeakable shame of wife and children. It all began on the day when he "pitched his tent toward Sodom." I could fill the hour with incidents of the same kind which have occurred under my own observation in our city. I have seen many families come here and become enamored of the Sodom life. With the gaining of wealth there has come a demand for different companionship and ways of living. They have moved into a larger house on a fashionable street. They and their children go to the theater in preference to the church and make their friends among the people whose name and shame may be found in the papers which publish society news. I have lived long enough in the city to see how it all comes out. To learn that we have only to return to the story of Lot, for the end is the same in all ages and in all lands.

Lot is in Sodom. There is a fine chance for him to tell men of Jehovah the true God, and to lead them to forsake their

sins, but so far as we can gather he does nothing of the sort. At the end of his sojourn there are not ten righteous persons, including his own family, to be found in the city. A city so utterly wicked is to be visited by the wrath of God and wiped from the face of the earth. In mercy the warning comes to Lot and how much the prayers of Abraham had to do with that the world will never know. See Lot as he goes with hurried step and blanched face to urge his daughters, who had married heathen men, to leave the fated city and thus escape the wrath of God. May your anxious cry never meet with such a response on the part of your children. "He seemed unto them as one that mocked." I hear their husbands saying, "You are the last man to talk about the wrath of your God. You never showed us that you cared for His laws or His worship. You never set the example of devotion in your own home, and we care as little for your God as you do. We will go on with our revels, and your room will be better than your company." Then comes the hour of doom and with the rising of the sun Lot, with

his two daughters, enter into the little city of Zoar, and Sodom and Gomorrah and all the plains are swept by the fires of God.

What has become of the flocks and herds, the corner-lots and fine houses in Sodom, and all the money in the bank? The accumulations of a lifetime are swept away, his wife is dead, and the two daughters that go with him prove themselves to be so vile that we almost wonder that God did not leave them with their sisters. Lot is too old to begin life again. He suffered so terribly in Sodom that he dares not live in Zoar. We can picture him sitting in the wilderness at the mouth of his cave and lamenting with unspeakable anguish the day when he chose a godless position and risked his soul to fill his pocket. He is at the mercy of his reprobate daughters, who do not hesitate to make him drunk that they may debauch themselves, and the curtain falls upon this life, once so full of promise under such circumstances as might wring pity from a heart of stone.

Is there any man here who is pitching

his tent toward Sodom? Pull up your stakes before you are ruined forever. Some of you are in sorrow over the wayward course of your children. How came they to be what they are? Have you not taught them by your own example that the things of this world—its business and its pleasure—are to be chosen first and that the things of God are of little importance? You will never have any influence for good with your children until your motives and choices are changed, and until you have asked God and your children to forgive you for your worldly life.

With you it is not too late to make the wise choice. Of what consequence will be a good position for your children and a good bank account for yourself when the day of reckoning comes and you stand before God? Better the lot of Abraham with the scantiest pasture on the rockiest slope and the blessing of Almighty God. Learn from Lot's awful experience that the little which a righteous man hath is better than the treasures of many wicked, and that the first thing to be reckoned with in life is God and duty.

V

THE MODERN PHARISEE

I thank thee that I am not as other men are.—LUKE xviii. 2.

THERE is no man less likely than the Pharisee to be overpraised, and yet there is something to be said in his favor. As a churchman he was a great success. He knew his Bible by heart; he was punctilious in all Sabbath observances. He knew the fast days and the feast days of the Church and kept them all; he stood firm against all innovations upon the established order of things and observed all the proprieties. He had a pew in an orthodox church—if they had any pews—and paid for it. His name was often seen upon the subscription papers of his time, and if there was a meeting called to protest against graft or nepotism on the part of the mayor, aldermen, or policemen of Jerusalem, his name was likely to be on the call. The papers frequently had letters to the editor from his pen in which

he called attention to the need of better enforcement of the laws against begging and urged the ringing of the curfew to keep minors off the street after 9 o'clock at night.

He was also a well-read man. If any man knew the religious and political history of his time it was the Pharisee. He could not be called a higher critic—he was too orthodox and conservative for that. He had a keen scent for heresy and was never accused of undermining the faith of the fathers. He was a man who paid his bills, too. To be sure, he wanted his money's worth, but when his bills were admitted the pay would come. He always settled without making a man get judgment against him. He never claimed residence in a town where the taxes were less than in Jerusalem and he paid taxes on all he possest—or at least on all that was in sight. He was a friend of order and of the existing government. If there was anybody he despised it was a man of doubtful or wicked reputation, especially if that man was in official position. Nothing fretted his soul more than the wicked

extortions of the tax-collectors, commonly called publicans. Well, if the Pharisee was a good churchman and a good scholar and a good citizen, why do you find so much fault with him and why does the name leave a bad taste in one's mouth? Paul was a Pharisee and says he behaved himself so well that he was blameless in any matter touching the law. If there is a man here who can say about himself as much as Paul the Pharisee could, let him stand up; I should like his picture for my gallery of saints.

The Pharisees had their rise in the refusal of the better part of the Jews in the times of Ezra to associate and intermarry with the heathen, tho they did not get their name until the year 100 B. C. The Pharisee opposed the Greek or Hellenizing party. He had the best blood of Israel in his veins. His was the party of the Sanhedrin. I said he was orthodox religiously,—to be specific, he scrupulously observed the law. He believed in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and future retribution. As a Jew he looked for the coming of the

Messiah. He believed in angels and spirits. He was no materialist. He affirmed the watchful providence of God and the freedom of the human will.

What was the front of the Pharisee's offending that has so moved the world against him? Doctor Pusey has put it in a nutshell when he says: "The true Pharisee of our Lord's time had divine light in his head but wholly lacked divine love in his heart."

That leads me to observe that the Pharisee was a man of externals. He believed in the form, not in the spirit. We believe the form is nothing—or next to nothing. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

The great trouble with the Pharisee was his lack of love for other people. All his love was self-centered. Now I believe that a man ought to live so that he can respect himself. If a man lowers his conception of his dignity and worth, he is likely to lower the tone of his whole action. God has declared the wonderful power of man and made marvels of attainment possible to him. I pity the

man who loses sight of the poetic, the immortal, the godlike in man's nature. I pity him who can read history without an honest pride in the glorious achievements of his kind. I have no place for that cold, captious spirit that decries and despises mankind. What was and is the spirit of the Pharisee? The ancient Pharisee reveled in harsh judgments of his fellows and biting sarcasm and censure. He was a "backbiter and a busybody." The modern Pharisee has his grandfather's spirit, and if he ever says anything to God he thanks Him as his grandfather did that he is not like other people. The modern Pharisee with high conception of his own worth despises his fellows. There is your literary Pharisee. He is a cultured man; she—alas! alas!—is a cultured woman; she may even be a school-teacher. The unpardonable sin is mental obtuseness. It is almost worse than murder. To use an ungrammatical sentence is to descend to a depth of infamy from which the offender can never rise. If a man is stupid, carry him out to the guillotine—the world is better off

without him! Now the good thing about this Pharisee is that he has intellectual training or power, which is desirable; the bad thing about him is that he forgets that is only one of the many kinds of power, and distinctly not the highest.

That man with a well-groomed, well-to-do appearance is a Pharisee of wealth. He began poor and is rich. Why did not every other man do the same thing? He is strong and he can have no patience with a weak man. Not to be able to master one's ease or appetite or inclination is to be a slave, and he metaphorically kicks the slave with every step. The good thing about this man is that he has conquered his own ease and appetite; the bad thing about this man is that he will give no help to his weak brother for whom Christ died and who has not the capacity by nature to do strong things.

Here is your social Pharisee. He despises those who are beneath him in the social scale, and will have no dealings with them. Not to own a house and bank-stock, not to have had a smart or wealthy father, not to have gained some office by

ability, pertinacity, or trick—the sum of all these failures certainly marks a man whom it is not worth while to know. This Pharisee is wise to realize the advantages which come from social power; he is foolish and wicked to measure others by a rule so partial and a standard so low.

But there is also the Pharisee of the Church, and he is the worst of the lot. Now it is a good thing to hate sin. God does that. But it nowhere says that God hates sinners—the whole spirit of the Gospel is against that. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. The Pharisee can not finish his own prayer without slurring those who are not as good, morally, as himself. He draws his robe about him for fear of pollution. He has no longer any interest in the man. If he has done wrong, that is enough; cut him off! He knew better. What a hard thing man is. Put him on an eminence where he can criticize others and his heart grows hard. How he prides himself on his supreme attainments and power of life! The judge will flash his condemnation on the culprit at the bar,

and then pass out to do unnameable things. The only difference between the two is that one is found out by man, the other case is known only to God. The man in the jury-box is hard on the sinner proportionally with his own wickedness. If it takes a rogue to catch a rogue, it takes a culprit to utterly blast another culprit.

But next to him stands the honest Pharisee—I mean the man who is sincere but heartless. I mean the woman who is herself pure but will scorch the soul of her erring sister with the fiery blast of her indignation, leaving no place for repentance or reformation. Cold to all mercy is your Pharisee; boasting of his own excellencies, full of bitterness and accusation for all other transgressors; priding himself that he hates evil-doers; feeling no need of mercy himself and merciless toward all others. His strength is that he keeps from outbreaking sin; his weakness is that he is bankrupt in that virtue without which all other virtues are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

What does Jesus say of the Pharisee? He says that he is loveless and that it is better not to live than not to love. Let me show how he riddles the whole philosophy and practise of the Pharisees. They believed in precepts. They made the law only a manual of religious etiquette. Their righteousness was formalism. Christ's whole teaching in regard to God was as a Father, not as a Lawgiver or Judge. He cares for sinners, seeks the lost, then opens the banquet hall for the prodigal and waits the feast for the last laggard foot of the sin-sick and weary. He excoriates externalities; demands not outward correctness but inward moral life. No action is of any moral worth unless it expresses an inward disposition. A man may give alms and pray and fast and still be a hypocrite. He says mercy is better than sacrifice; to be reconciled to one's brother is better than to come to the altar; good deeds are better than ceremonial prescriptions. Love to God and man belong together.

The spirit of the Pharisee is self-com-

placency. He has attained. There is nothing more for him to do. Why should he who is so wise, so generous, and so good be at any throb of heart or stretch of muscle to do more? The Pharisee makes no discoveries; he ventures on no new attainments. His position is the *ultima thule* of the ancients—there is nothing beyond. He does not move out to save the lost; he plans no aggressive work for God or men. The dry rot of character is upon him. When a man is content with himself he has met his second death. Only the man with a divine unrest can be God's man. For him the world is waiting. For him all hearts cry out. The holy unrest of the publican is better than the complacency of the Pharisee. Jesus gives His approval to the publican because he is on the march. He is fronting God.

Two went to pray, or, rather, say
One went to brag, the other to pray;
One stands up close and treads on high
Where the other dare not send his eye;
One nearer to the altar trod,
The other to the altar's God.

Whatever else you may be, do not be a Pharisee. Jesus had a place for penitent thieves and for repentant sinners of every kind, but for those who blocked up the doorway of His kingdom by their own hollow pretenses He had no place. His words are as hot as the wrath of a loving God can make them against those who hate their brothers and who will not touch the burdens which fall upon them. Do not pride yourself upon the virtues of your position. All these are yours only that you may help others. If you have a fine place for your feet, reach down a helping hand that you may lift others to the light and life of the blessed peace of God. Have patience with the ignorant and the foolish and the poor. There are only a few great men in the world after all. Out of 80,000,000 people, you could possibly count on your fingers those who will be remembered by the world a century after they are dead. If you are tempted to be proud go to Greenwood and Woodlawn and see the end of it all.

The best prayer for the best of us is: "God be merciful to me a sinner." I can

not play the Pharisee toward the faults of my neighbors; I have enough of my own. I can not play the Pharisee toward him in wealth or ability or position, for others tower farther above me than I above him. Only one man was happy when the hour of prayer was over. Cold came the Pharisee and cold he went away. In contrite tears the publican made his plaint and God, who can see a tear farther than a star, sent him on with a happy heart.

VI

THE TRAGEDY OF MEMORY

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.—LUKE xvi. 25.

THIS is a parable most unique. It is full of antitheses. It is also full of judgments reversed and wonderful surprizes. We ask the rich man's name. Human history would give us nomen, prenomen, and cognomen, but this history ignores it—a certain rich man. But here is this beggar, and his name goes down to posterity. How strange the fate which so arranged! There is but one solution. "Christ seems," says Augustine, "to have been reading from that book where He found the name of the poor man written, but found not the name of the rich. How these men are contrasted! One clad in sea-purple, too costly a garment for

any but a prince; clad also in byssus or fine linen, hardly less in value or esteem; one robed like a prince, the other covered with sores; one faring sumptuously, the other seeking in vain for crumbs; one petted by courtiers and each whim gratified by willing servants, the other so homeless and friendless as to wring pity from the brute heart of the dogs.

It happens that Death passes this way, invited by Starvation to the beggar, and by Surfeit to the rich man. He kindly takes first the one who is ready, and waiting to leave his misery, and leaves the other to revel a little longer amid his joys. He gives him one more chance to answer the cry of the poor at his palace gate. It was light around the gate, strangely light. The dogs did not understand it in the darkness, but the beggar did. He saw rich tables loaded with choicest food, and one kinder than he had ever seen reached down and lifted him in his arms. The touch was so tender it seemed as if he must be in his mother's arms and he fell asleep. His old companions, the dogs, drew back from that altered face and the

night air heard the lament of his only mourners. His body was of so little account that Jesus does not say what became of it. In the morning the fathers of the city ordered it taken, as the body of any beast, and put in one of the holes which the potters had dug in search for clay; for that is the meaning of the "potter's field."

It was not a great while after, I fancy, that the rich man started to rise from a banquet, his heavy face grew red, he put his hand upon his forehead and fell. The doctors said he died of apoplexy and since he was dead nobody cared to dispute it. They had a great funeral and made a great parade. There were many hired mourners and pipers who recited his praises and called upon all to weep. They laid him in a carved sarcophagus. There was a funeral feast of great extravagance, and when the days of mourning were ended they said, "It is all over with him now."

But they were greatly mistaken. He was beyond their sight but another historian takes the pen. His first chapter

says: "The beggar was carried to Abraham's bosom." "The rich man died and was buried." Men bore Dives to a grave, but angels bore Lazarus to paradise. Death swept away the table and the purple of Dives and the rags and the sores of Lazarus. Two men now are on even footing. And the second chapter reads: "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." I am not here to argue about that—Jesus said it. What is hell? If it should turn out that it is a state and not a place, there will be little comfort in that to the sinner. Whatever the place or state may be it seems that he is in trouble. Why? Strauss says, "His only crime was his wealth." That I deny. It is nothing against a man to be rich. But if a man who might have been rich consents for truth and charity's sake to be poor, then are his beggar's rags the kingliest purple. Lazarus had something to his credit besides being poor, which of itself was no credit at all. He was patient —he neither upbraided the rich man, nor murmured against God. His name, "God is my help," was a confession of his faith,

and it was his faith and not his poverty that carried him to Abraham's bosom. Of Dives, Trench says well: "The play in which he acted the rich man is ended and as he went off the stage he was stript of all the trappings with which he had been furnished that he might sustain his part; there remains only the fact that he played it badly and will, therefore, have no praise, but uttermost rebuke, from Him who alloted to him this character to sustain." Chrysostom said, "For as on the stage some enter assuming the masks of kings and captains but being in truth nothing of the kind, so also in the present life wealth and poverty are only masks."

> "If thou art rich thou art poor;
> For like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
> Thou bear'st thy heavy riches, but a journey,
> And death unloads thee."

But the parable discloses something further concerning the rich man's sorrow. It is crystalized in one word, "Remember." And here is a mighty lesson for us who expect one day to stand stript of our masks.

Memory is a spiritual as well as an intellectual power. Sir William Hamilton calls it the "self-energy of the soul." It simply uses the physical materials which it finds at hand, but is not dependent upon them. All our knowledge goes with us and only waits the proper call to come out. It is part of ourselves. There is a difference in men's power to recall. Themistocles could call the names of twenty thousand citizens of Athens. Ben Jonson said he could repeat all he had ever written, and whole books he had reviewed. In 1581 a Corsican youth repeated thirty-six thousand words after once hearing them. Macaulay could repeat the whole of Paradise Lost. Humboldt never forgot anything. It is only this mortal clay that makes us forget. And the testimony is all-sufficient to prove that in rare cases of extreme excitement the whole world of our life with every event and thought rushes back upon us. Of Webster's "Answer to Hayne" it was said, "Everything he had seen or heard, read or thought, stood before him in perfect order." All of which shows us

that there is no such thing as forgetting. As another has said, "Each terrified thought of life rushes for the moment to an open window to behold itself. It is not simply a review of the past but a frightful cavalcade thundering through the soul and the past becomes the present. It would be more possible for heaven and earth to pass away than for a single act, word, or thought to be forgotten, for they make us what we are and what we shall be."

But to return. Why did the rich man suffer? He was a respectable man; no crime of malice or oppression, of lust or passion was charged upon him. "There was a certain rich man" and this was his crime: a beggar lying at his gate and lying unrelieved. He had not done as he would be done by, and he could not escape from himself. He had his chance and refused. We have opportunity enough. We are saved by hearing and heeding, not by ghosts. Remember! That was the word which kindled such a fire in his soul as rivers of water could not quench. It set every nerve athrill with

anguish. And yet he was not a man of outbreaking sin. How then shall any sinning soul escape? "Will the angel who whets not his sword in vain in this life be conquered in the next?" It is memory that drives men to yield to the officers of the law, and to take their own lives in the hope that memory will commit suicide. But to such the poet replies:

"Poor foolish mortal, thou had'st better live,
Then thou may'st snatch the respite of a moment.
In death thou can'st not; oblivion is the dream of fools.
Men sleep in life, in death they wake."

Remember! The books are certain to be opened. If we can not stand it to have our friends know all about us in this life, can we stand it any better when the white light of heaven and the eyes of God's good angels are turned upon the open book where our thoughts and deeds are written and a stereotyped copy of which we bear? The single word "remember" will strike us dumb. We may make shift to answer "I am free at least from the rich man's sin. No poor man lies at my gate uncared for." Think a moment. An infinitely

greater crime is thine. Thou hast rejected Him who loved thee as no other, and for whom there was no place in your heart. To other sins you added the basest ingratitude. You talk of being able to face your record. What will you do when you see Him whom you have despised, whose word you have contemned, whose love you have rejected, whose claim you have refused, when He stands forth as judge and says, *Remember?* It was the thought of such a scene which made John Newton sing:

"Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look:
It seemed to charge me with His death
Tho not a word He spoke.
My conscience felt and owned the guilt
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there."

But is there no help? Is it true that

"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

Right glad am I that memory the lash, may become memory the balm, for it will still the aching of my heart when memory realizes how He said to my repentant soul, "Thy sins which were many are all forgiven thee. Go in peace and sin no more." So memory may become at last thy deliverer. If thou hast never found relief from the bitter tragedy of life find it now. Come to know the transforming power of a new affection. Give up the selfish and the sensual and be at peace with God through Jesus Christ his Son.

VII

A HOME FOR THE SOUL

Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.—PSALMS xc. 1.

THIS is a psalm of Moses. It tells of the mutation of human life and represents the race as a wanderer upon the face of the earth. Moses knew most of the wanderings of the children of Israel and describes those wanderings in the wilderness as the result of sin. It is the cry of a heart that is homesick and that is fain to say with a deeper meaning than even the homesick Payne knew, "Return, O Lord, how long." We are dwellers in tents; we have no continuing city. We never had but one abiding-place and we have separated ourselves from that by our sins. Whenever we have been at rest and at peace, it was because we have been with Thee. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." God is the

home of the soul. Augustine was right when he said: "The soul is restless till it rests in thee."

The home of the soul! The word home has an unction on our lips. We never appreciate it so much as when we are separated from it, and one of the sad things to us is that home, the dearest of earthly places, is likewise the most transitory.

Children do not always—not often—fully appreciate their home. They are really quite ready to leave it. The day when they left it to move out into the great world was for some a day eagerly longed for. There was a flush on the cheek and fire in the eye. Perhaps tearful eyes and kind remonstrance from those we bade good-by, but we were anxious to go and there were few regrets. We went home after the passage of months or years, but we were ready to return to our distant field of work. But one day we woke up to find ourselves homesick. Perhaps it was the warm shining of the sun in springtime that brought back the days when life was in the spring, and the bloom was on the apple trees; perhaps it was a

song, or the scent of a flower, or the sight of a face that reminded you of mother. I do not know how it came, but I pity the man that has never been homesick, for it shows he never had a true home or else that he has a heart of stone. But when the longing for home, born of pain or pleasure, of loss or of gain, comes upon a man in middle life, let him go back to the old home and a deeper pain awaits him—the pain of unexpected change. The home looks different to him. What seemed large looks small now; what he thought was fine is but poor and commonplace. And then the lights that shone are gone out; father and mother, one or both, are gone, and it is more than likely that strangers walk the old floor and hoe in the old garden. The trees are gnarled, if they are not cut down. The neighbors are gone and the place you have been thinking about as home you realize now is home only in name. The things that made it home are gone, and it seems almost like the body of a friend from which light and life are gone. You turn from it and pass on, but you do it with a sense of lonesome-

ness which you will never quite shake off when memory waves her wand and brings up the long-ago.

This longing for home is common to all men and to all ages. Jacob had it in Egypt, and as he stood in the palace of the Pharaoh he thought of the vine-clad hills of Judea and their purple harvests, of the green valleys and the lowing herds he should see no more, and his heart melted. The days spent amid the delights of the old home seemed few and the present days in a strange land were but evil. When he came to die he could not be at peace until he had taken a solemn pledge of Joseph that he would carry him back to the green hills of his youth and bury him among his kindred.

The exiled Hebrews in Babylon could not sing one of the Lord's songs in a homeless land, and so for sheer homesickness they sat themselves down and wept. Charlotte Yonge gives us a touch of home-longing to light up her story of the Moors in Granada. Abdurraman was the first Moorish Kalif in Spain. He was born by the Euphrates and pined amid Cor-

dova's splendors. He planted a palm-tree from his Syrian home in his Spanish garden, and he could never look at it without tears.

The Puritans of New England will not be charged with overmuch sentiment, but they often wept with heartache for the land they had left. They gave the familiar names of the old home to the new, that in the speaking of them their hearts might find comfort. So it is *New* England and Plymouth and Cambridge and Boston. The Dutch who settled here were not behind in devotion to the tender memories of the old days and they called this land *New* Holland for the home-longing which was in their soul.

They are few who keep the same home for two generations. We move on. All things change. Renan said: "There is nothing so sad as the eternal flow of things." Alas, the kaleidoscope of life! It is ever turning. The pictures are all different, for the pieces which form them never fall twice alike. We are on a journey, ever going on to new things. "We may travel back over a thousand leagues

of space; we can not travel back over one moment of time."

We long for a home and these are some of the reasons:

1. Home was a place of safety. When danger threatened us we ran home. It was the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. We were certain we should find protection. The strong arm of father was there. Its hospitable door always opened to receive us and closed between us and any danger.

2. It was a place of rest. No spot so full of ease. No place where the tired limbs were so comfortable. No bed like the one mother made. No food like hers —everything was there to recuperate the body and the mind and send us out rested to toil again.

3. There, if anywhere, we were understood. Allowances were made for our weakness which nobody else would make; when our words outran our hearts they knew it at home and did not lay it up against us. When we were impatient and thoughtless, silence instead of antagonism humbled us to a better mind, and a good-night kiss told us we were forgiven.

4. So it was the place of love. Love that was not "cabin'd, crib'd, confin'd," but love that was prodigal of its riches. It did not ask for a recompense. It blossomed and fruited like the trees, because it could not help it. Oh, what heights mother's love used to climb; what dark nights it went through unwearied; and the joy of that circle when all the chairs were set! Let me never forget it, tho the daisies should blossom for a hundred years between those faces and mine! Love that never changed whether I came or went, whether I was sick or well, responsive or unresponsive; which was mine to the full in prosperity and overflowed its banks in the time of my adversity!

Let us look at the comparison between our earthly and our eternal home.

1. Is an earthly home a place of safety? Then what shall I say of him who has his dwelling-place in God? He shall abide in safety under the wings of the Almighty. He is our strong tower into which we may run and be safe. "What time I am afraid I will trust in the Lord. He is my fortress; I shall not be moved.

He shall deliver me and that right early." Wordsworth wrote:

> "Trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home."

Morrison adds, "A less spiritual poet would have written, 'From heaven which is our home'; but the psalmist and Wordsworth are at one and both realize it is *God* and not *heaven* which is our home, for only He can make heaven."

2. Do we talk of the rest of home? "Oh, that I had wings like a dove that I might fly away and be at rest!" "He shall cover thee with his feathers." "We shall renew our strength like the eagle." "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God."

> "O God, our help in ages past
> Our hope for years to come,
> Our shelter from the stormy blast
> And our eternal home."

3. If our own people at home understand us, God more so. No breath of human suspicion can reach us. No failure to do or to be can be falsely charged

against us. He who made us, shall He not understand us; and He who set every nerve, shall He not know its tension? Shall He whose children we are deal unjustly with us, when it is written, "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him"?

4. Ah, what shall I say of the love of home compared with the love of God? Oh, the love of God is boundless! Wider than the widest sea! "God so loved the world that he gave his begotten Son." I have never seen a love that could measure up to that. We do not hang on our walls the picture of the murderer of our children, and yet God hangs up the picture of a rebel world in the galleries of heaven, side by side with the picture of His son. Love that is changeless, and yearning forever over the wayward, "who would not that any should perish"—that is the love of the home of my soul. If the old home has changed, as change it must, I do not wonder that every heart capable of smiles and tears longs for a home, and with a passion that will brook no denial and be hindered by no obstacle, seeks to make a

home for the years, however brief, that he may spend here on the way to his threescore and ten. But I am on a pilgrimage longer and more eventful than that which Israel trod. I must have a home for my soul, and one that will last.

Here it is in the ringing words of my text: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." Our mansion-home. Moses could stand it in the desert; nay, it became a place of quiet and of peace, because while others dwelt in the black tents of the Arabs he dwelt in God. And when God took him up in sight of the homes of the promised land which he might never share, it did not disturb him, for he had a securer resting-place. In God he lived and moved and had his being.

The soul must have another dwelling-place than a tent that may fall in the night and must be struck in the morning. The earth may answer for the beasts of the field, and the sea will do for the finny tribes; the air may be inhabited by birds of every wing, and the stars may find their proper setting in the firmament, but

there is no place for the soul to abide but in God alone. That is a beautiful thought to me that the soul can find its home where there are no mutations of time and love. "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

It is sad to think that such a home has been slighted by many a man. While its doors have stood wide open, the sad and homeless have wandered still deeper into the desert and the gloom. Lest some heart should unwittingly pass the open door, God's messengers stand beckoning to every passerby, and, better still, His only begotten Son says to every soul, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall find rest unto his soul." My invitation is to the spiritually homeless, to those who are unhappy, to any wanderer from God. Come back to your Father's house where there is bread enough and to spare. Come back to the heart which loves you best. Come home!

Are you homeless and friendless? Who can sympathize with you and help you like Jesus? No man was ever so truly homeless as He! For the hour of His

birth there was no home, and in the days of His toil He had neither nest nor cave to shelter Him; and when His life had gone out on the cross there was only a borrowed grave at the last. He will be sure to know how to sympathize with all hearts that ache and are lonely. Others like yourself have been homesick. One of the saddest letters in literature is that of David Gray, quoted by Morrison, "I am coming home, for I am homesick. What is about climate, frost or snow when one is at home? Get my room ready. I shall die there, and nobody shall nurse me except my own dear mother. Home, home!" Burroughs says of Carlyle: "A kind of homesickness of the soul was on Carlyle and it deepened with age." Is not the same true of yourself? I am sure you will not wander longer away from your own rest, but you will come to-night to God, the Soul's home. Jean Paul Richter has a beatitude that always moistened my eyes—may its prophecy be true for your soul: "Blessed are they that are homesick, for they shall come at last to their Father's house."

VIII

DEMAS THE SENSUALIST

Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.—II. Tim. iv. 10.

If there is any time when the leaves of memory make a mournful rustle in the dark it is when we recall the deflection of a friend. It is a chill hour when we stand alone by the ashes of a love whose fires have gone out. In the bitterness of such an experience David cried: "It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked into the house of God in company." It is hard to lose friends because of misunderstandings, but it is peculiarly sad to lose them on account of our adversities. It is true that a man who would give up friendship because of our adversities is not worthy to be our friend but that is sorrow's crown of sor-

row. We have not only lost the cheer of his presence but he is more than dead to us. He has emptied love's shrine.

It is a characteristic of a strong nature to form strong friendships, and Paul was no exception. As David had his Jonathan, so Paul had his Timothy and his Titus. And among those who stood near to them, who were the sharers of his deep regard as well as sharers of his privations, his perils and his prisons, he names Demas. In his first imprisonment at Rome Demas and Luke had waited upon him in his chains and made the hours pass pleasantly. He is again in prison and if ever he needed friends it is now, for the temper of the times is against him. He is old and feeble, and the Roman dungeon is chill and damp. It was from such a dungeon that the brave Jugurtha cried one hundred and seventy years before, "How cold are your baths, O Romans!" It is no wonder that Paul writes to Timothy, "The cloak that I left at Troas bring with thee." It will help to keep him warm through the cheerless Roman winter. Little enough will Nero care whether he is

cold or warm. But for a man who had been his fellow laborer in God's vineyard, who had ministered to him in his need and counseled with him for the propagation of the Gospel, who had been a mouthpiece as well as hands and feet for him—for such a man to leave him in the hour of danger when the sky was already growing black with the storm of coming persecution, must have made him sad beyond expression, tho he will face it all without a murmur. His master was forsaken; it is enough that the disciple be as his Lord.

But the thing that hurts him most is not his present loss, but the cause of it: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." If Demas had gone to brave danger anywhere for Christ's sake Paul would have missed him, but he would have been happy in the thought that he was giving witness to the truth and multiplying those who would snatch up the torch so soon to fall from his own hands and bear it over land and sea. But the trouble with Demas is the light has gone out of his soul and with it the courage out of his heart.

Demas was a sensualist. I do not mean that he was gross and libidinous. I mean that he was moved by the things that appeal to the senses, by the seen and the temporal. Some live the worldly life after a gross fashion and some on the lines of intellect and refinement; but the life without God is substantially the same: it ends in loss and humiliation.

Just what form of "this present world" beguiled Demas the apostle does not state and it is not necessary for us to know. It may have been a desire for ease instead of hardship and danger, for the association of home and friends, for the luxuries which would bring enjoyment or preferment. It is not necessary for us to suppose that he became either an apostate or a voluptuary. He may have continued his formal connection with the Church. If we had the records of the Church at Thessalonica for the year 65 we might find the name of Demas among the deacons or stewards.

This, however, is true: duty is no longer uppermost. The supreme importance of full surrender to the purpose of the

Lord is forgotten. By his own choice he severs himself from vital connection with God's cause. Whatever outward form his defection takes, the soul of the better life is gone. What words are more clear and far-reaching than those of John: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love this world the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Demas is the representative of many people in the Church and out of it who love this present world, but who find out sooner or later that the world's crosses are heavier than Christ's; that its garden is a Golgotha where its flowers blossom among skulls.

Now I have no sympathy with those who would make life one long formal profession. A gloomy religious man is an anomaly to me. There is no good reason

for measuring a man's piety by the length of his face nor his devotion to God by his denunciation of every innocent amusement. A laugh has more religion in it than a frown and infinitely more than a sneer. The man whom I strive to follow began his public wonders at a wedding-feast and was so kind and cheery that little children loved him. I know no reason why a minister should always wear black, why he should be so cold and stately, so gloomy and punctilious, that little children should shiver in his presence and go a block out of their way rather than meet him. He is the bearer of good news and the joy of it should shine out of his face and give spur to his sympathy and life.

But there is a wide difference between the man who puts his relation to God first and uses so much of the things of this world as will help him to the widest usefulness, and the man who says by his acts: "The most important thing is to seek position and power, to become rich, to have a good time. These I will seek supremely. After I have gained them will be time

enough to think about God and duty." Religion to such a man is an empty word and conscience a thing to be tricked and cajoled. The spirit of the world is one thing, the spirit of Christ is quite another, and one can not predominate except at the exclusion of the other. It is sad to see one running the silly rounds of pleasure and calling that life. It is sad to see one with no higher ideal than the ceaseless grind of business or the bickering and contention of the struggle for position, and bending all his energies for that which after all does not satisfy the longing which each one feels. If a man does not know any better he might be pardoned. If he has not experienced a taste of that which is noble and divine we may not wonder so much at what he misses. But the saddest thing of all is to see a man who has known the truth as it is in Christ and the joys of the Christian life to go back again to the poor comforts of the world and feed his soul again on husks. But alas! such cases are not few. We live our lives as the children of Israel lived theirs —in the midst of hostile tribes. We

thought we had driven off the enemy but he was lurking near like the dark Bedouin. One day we slept the careless sleep of self-confidence and awoke to find the enemy upon us—our fields pillaged, our treasures put to the torch. That man yonder used to walk with God but his enemy watched for him. Ah! but he is a wily fisher, is our enemy, and he has many baits and he knows where to cast each one.

The failure of the inner light does not come at once. Little by little the joy of service fails. The voice of conscience is less loudly heard than formerly and soon the life divine is ended and the life selfish begun. It is impossible that the life of self and the divine life should continue together. "Ye can not serve God and man" was not an arbitrary dictum of a would-be rabbi. It is a scientific fact than which nothing in psychology is truer. These two are in eternal antagonism. You will hate one and love the other. You can not, as George Eliot has said, entertain God and the devil on the same floor and on equal terms. There is this world of the seen about us, this present world.

It is the world of the sensual. It thrusts itself upon the thought of every man. It makes its bids. It appeals to passion and appetite and every selfish desire. Its votaries are old men and women as well as youths and maidens. We all say when Beau Brummel or My Lady Pompadour passes, There goes a lover of this world. But when I see the hard lines on the face of Midas and Dives I say the mark of his servitude is on him, he belongs to this world; and when I see a man who has allowed his religious life to grow cold, who lets the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches interfere with his devotion to God and duty—when I hear a man always complaining about the contribution box and the frequent demands made for the poor and the sick, for missions and schools, I say, here comes Demas who hath forsaken his Master, having loved this present world. What other business have we in this world except to be useful? Why did God entrust us with wealth if it was not to see if we would use it for His glory and the good of His children?

"Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Go not forth of us 'twere all alike
As if he had them not."

No honor of this present world ever amounted to anything permanent, even in those things that the worldly call great. The present and the future are in eternal antagonism. The price of an easy life to-morrow is a strenuous life to-day. You are willing to toil hard and do menial things, to deny yourself of luxuries and even necessities in order that you may get a footing. It is that spirit which made the boy drudgers of yesterday, Carnegie, Armour, Wanamaker and their ilk, the millionaires of to-day. In spiritual life this fact of the renunciation of present ease for future good is supremely true. There is a higher life than that of this world. It will cost something to maintain it, but you were meant for that life and you never will be happy with a meaner life. Haunted by its possibilities you

will never be at rest until you breathe its atmosphere and feel its thrill. A young man came to Jesus. He showed him something better than a coldly selfish life. When he saw it he was enraptured of it and would fain receive it, but alas! when his Master named the price he would not pay it, for he loved this present world. A sorrow settled upon his soul which shadowed him to his grave.

We are far enough removed to weigh the choice of Demas and that fateful day. When Socrates and his judges parted he said: "And now we go our ways—I to death, you to life. Which is better God knows," but the thoughtful world would rather stand with Socrates than with his judges. When Paul bade good-by to Demas, Demas went out into the sunlight and away to the purple vineyards of Macedonia. Paul turned to his prison, to its cold and damp, to the chafing and the clanking of his chains and a little later to his martydom at the block. But which after all was the better choice? The hardest sacrifices are those made for the world and alas! they avail nothing. If Demas

wanted to avoid martyrdom he went the wrong way. Tolstoy spoke wisely when he said: "Do you call the doctrines of Jesus hard? How much harder is the doctrine of the world. Untold millions have been crusht by a social system organized on the doctrine of the world." You can read through Fox's "Book of Martyrs" in a day, but if the World's Book of Martyrs should be written life would be too short to read it and its records would be more fearful than those of the Inquisition. And all these had the pangs of martyrdom without the palm of the victor. Ah! you can dance the dance of death in scarlet as well as in sack-cloth, and purple and fine linen will not ease the pain. "If for thy pleasure thou shalt do anything that is evil, the pleasure passeth but the evil remaineth to thy torment." Make the wise choice and make it now.

IX

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.—Exodus ii. 9.

On the bosom of the Nile mighty fleets have floated, and on its banks great battles have been fought in the centuries past. The sources of its waters are among the later secrets which daring men have wrested from the hand of nature at the cost of many lives and much treasure. There are many names of modern times which will be forever associated with it—Livingstone, Gordon, Grant, Speke, Stanley. Up its waters many helpful influences are yet to go for the enlightenment of the Dark Continent, and humble worshipers shall sing the songs of Christian faith upon its banks, as now they sing them along the Hudson or the Mississippi.

Tho many a brave prow has cut its waters, measured by influence, the great-

est bark it ever bore was a willow basket with a babe for captain and crew. But it had an unseen Pilot, who steered it to a haven provided by the daughter of a king. It is not necessary that I should rehearse the pleasing story of the rescue of the child Moses, or dwell at length upon the fact that he who is to deliver a race from a Pharaoh's chain is nourished in a Pharaoh's palace. You remember how unwittingly the child's mother is selected by his rescuer as his nurse.

"It chanced: eternal God that chance did guide."

"Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages," said Neferari to Jochebed, and she places the child in his mother's arms. The mother has him only until he is three years old; but in that time, with such subsequent visits as she may have made as a domestic at the palace, she so impresses his heart with the promises of God and the glorious future of his people, that all the wisdom of the Egyptians does not obliterate the impression. So profound are his convictions under her teaching that he

chooses the reproach of Israel rather than the riches of Egypt. Wise mother! you thought only to lead a child, but you have led a nation, and in preserving unspotted that little life a race has been preserved to God. Greater deeds are often wrought in a Hebrew hovel than in a Pharaoh's palace.

The command of Pharaoh's daughter is the same which accompanies every traveler who floats into our homes from an unknown shore: "Train this child for me." It is God's property. The object of all training should be thoroughly settled at the very beginning. How will you intelligently instruct a child if you have no well-conceived plan or purpose in that instruction?

The trainer of that horse is training him for speed. He will put no heavy burdens upon him. He will allow nothing which can possibly incapacitate him when the time shall come to win the prize. Will you be less careful with an immortal soul? The trainer will hardly leave his charge when the lists are open, so careful is he

lest harm should come to the object of his care.

But I have heard fathers and mothers say, "I do not believe in interfering with a child in the matter of his relations to God." Hear it, angels, and shudder! And is there no difference between vice and virtue, heaven and hell, God and the devil, that a child should not be moved by every power that love can bring to choose one or the other? Not taught concerning God! That is the first business you have with your child, and it is the special purpose for which God gave him to you. "The child will find out for himself." You do not allow him to do that in any other important matter. You even insist upon his articles of food. The child has a choice of his own, but you say, "No, my child, that will harm you; you can not have it." And you insist even in the face of the child's protest and tears.

You hire teachers at great expense, and supplement their teaching with your own earnest endeavors. Will you do less in matters of moral instruction? It is true, as you have said, the boy may find out;

but one does not find out what poison will do in his system until he has taken it, and then it is too late to help him. Many a man has found out the folly of evil sowing, but it was after the harvest had come.

If your child were to be adopted by some king, at a certain age; if he could pass a requisite examination, how you would talk of that king and the requirements! You would speak often of that country, of its people, its laws, and its customs. But, tho your child is an heir to an everlasting kingdom, I fear he is not often told of the requirements of that kingdom, nor led lovingly to pattern his life after Christ, the Elder Brother.

You have more than an individual interest; for the great questions of morality and religion in the nation and the world are to be settled for the next fifty years by the children of to-day. All unknown to you, you are daily, it may be, in association with those who are to make or mar the destinies of a nation. John Trebonius, the instructor of Martin Luther, always appeared before his boys with uncovered head. "There may be among

them," said he, "those who shall be learned doctors, sage legislators—nay, princes of the Empire." Even then there was among them that solitary monk who shook the world. Great destinies are being wrought out in the humblest home, and high dignity is granted to every mother; for, "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

"It is strange," as said the Greek philosopher, "that we spend so much time in gaining property and so little on those to whom we are soon to leave it all." When you and I have passed away questions which have long vexed us will be settled, and some man who is now a child in the cradle will solve the problem. Departed kings have left behind them pyramid and Pantheon and Colosseum, statue and triumphal arch, to tell of their wealth or power; but the mother who leaves the imprint of Christ upon her child shall have sweet recompense and blessed memorial when arch and statue have crumbled to dust.

The great problem of the advance of the Church of God is to be solved in the

home and in the Sunday-school. We are just beginning to realize this. Printing may be called the discovery of the fifteenth century, steam of the eighteenth century, and electricity of the nineteenth century, but the greatest discovery of our generation is the discovery of childhood. We have nearly ten millions of young people who have organized themselves in various young people's societies with the express purpose of becoming an aggressive force in the world for purity and righteousness. In the days of Whitefield, Edwards, and Finney the Church was enlarged by campaigns against men who were entrenched in evil habits or religious indifference. Tremendous cannonadings there were from such great siege guns as Edwards' sermon "Sinners in the hands of an angry God" and many surrendered, but as this battle continued through the following generations it became evident to Bushnell, Simpson, and others that the men against whom these great battles were waged had been cradled in their own homes and nourished at their own firesides; while they had been busy fighting

against sin in the lives of the men and women about them their own children had slipt out at the nursery door and joined the ranks of those who were the enemies of righteousness, and the burning question arose: How long will it take to conquer this world for God when the home furnishes more recruits for the devil than the hardest campaign can match with prisoners of hope. Lincoln said in '61 that he was so busy renting rooms in one end of his house that he had no time to put out the fire which was raging in the other end. So the Church had been so busy looking after the wandering sheep that it forgot to care for its own lambs until they, too, had strayed away. The present interest in childhood and youth has come from the conviction that unless the Church can do something to stop its own children from deserting to the enemy it can never hope to conquer the world.

As to methods of training in the home, I have little to say. The wise mother will find the best methods by experience. Each child needs a method suited to his pecu-

liarities. No method can be named of universal application. There are, however, some things which it is always wise to do. To every godless father and mother I say, Choose Christ for yourself as the first requisite for the proper discharge of your duties. To the Christian I say, Use the means of grace at home. Return thanks to God publicly at every meal. Set up the family altar. Your acts at home are more significant than your words in church. The children soon see whether your religion is a part of yourself or only a cloak which you put on for an occasion. Outsiders you may deceive, but your children will hold you at your real value.

"And I will give thee thy wages." I have spoken of the blessed return which came to Moses's nurse-mother. In our own time we have seen mothers reaping blessed harvests for faithful sowing in the home. The success of revival effort is very largely determined by the influence of these services on the youth. This work is in your hands, parents and teachers. Now is your time. Nothing is more certain than that with the development of

the child's physical life there comes the expanding of his spiritual nature. He is finding himself. The voice of his soul speaks out; you must supply what his soul needs or you will be guilty before God of the starving of a soul. I have never known a person eighteen years of age who had not heard the call of God, Give me thy heart. With much greater anxiety than we watch for the signs of physical development ought we to watch for this spiritual crisis, and they are wise parents and teachers who put aside every other matter to attend to this when the crucial hour comes. A long experience has taught me that the best members of the Church are usually those who come into it as children. They are not scarred by sin and bowed down by the pull of evil habits and selfish lives. Take care of the children and we shall not mourn over a decaying church.

Thy wages are sure. Who has not heard of St. Augustine and the more saintly Monica, his mother, who turned him unto God by her sweet, holy life? The depraved John Newton said the voice of

his mother came to him as it were from the dead, and led him back to virtue. John Randolph said, "I should have been an atheist but for the recollection of my sainted mother's prayers."

But for the prayerless mother, what wages! See that man in the gutter. The children turn frightened away; even the tender-hearted pass by on the other side. His lips are foul now, but once a mother delighted to kiss them; the eyes that are so dull now once shone like the stars. Once there were many who spoke him fair, but none is left to care for him now. It was such a man who said to me, "I never had any help at home." How is it with your girl, mother? Is she less interested in the good; does she go less to the house of God and more with worldly companions? I shudder when I think of the drift of society and of literature to-day. Others as good as your girl have drifted from home in a careless hour, and many in this fair city are living a shameful life. Can any of these say also, "I never had any help at home?" No help at home! Think of it! There are enough to help

toward sin. Enough to spread the net and rejoice when one more victim is added to the number. Many to whisper the words of evil which influence the heart. But in the place of all places from which strength should come, no help!

I do not charge any parent with not caring for the body of his child; the community would cry against such an outrage and demand that he perform the duties of a parent. I do not say you are not giving your children intellectual training; the law of the State makes that obligatory. But still it is true that the cry of starving childhood is reaching the ear of God. It is a cry for spiritual bread and spiritual instruction. Meet it in the fear of God, dear parents, and your children shall rise here and hereafter to call you blessed.

X

THE PERILS OF MIDDLE LIFE

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.—
I. Cor. xvi. 13.

I have often spoken of the opportunities of youth and of the compensations of old age; I wish to consider with you that period of life which wins most victories and faces most temptations. It is no disparagement of youth or old age to say that the greatest triumphs of life are the triumphs of maturity. Alexander and Napoleon in arms, Pitt and Summerfield in oratory, Keats and Shelley in poetry, stand for the great achievements of youth; Michelangelo and Titian in art, Adams and Gladstone in statecraft, Goethe, Victor Hugo and Holmes in literature, represent the possibility of achievement after fourscore years; but each of these classes stands for the unusual and the unexpected. It still remains true that the almost unnumbered

company of the successful and the great have done their noblest work when it was expected they would—at the zenith of their powers.

It is not the second and the third decades of life, nor the sixth and the seventh, which are the most fruitful in achievement. It is the fourth and the fifth. Moses is forty when he is first moved by the great impulse to deliver his people. Joshua is forty when he brings back the report which makes him a marked man for life. Luther began the period of his greatest usefulness at forty, and the same was true of Wesley. Pitt is premier at forty-eight and Wilberforce triumphs over the slave-trade at the same age. Webster is forty-eight when he makes his reply to Hayne, and Clay is forty-four when he makes his great speeches on the Missouri Compromise.

In the mercantile world comparatively few reach great wealth by their own efforts before they are forty, and the twenty years thereafter are the years of boldest and most successful financial operation. Experience waits upon judgment;

friendships bear fruit in business alliances; breadth of view, steadiness of purpose, strength and tenacity, knowledge of men and motives—all these unite to put a man in possession of the means of success.

But there is another side of middle life that greatly moves me. I am accustomed to urge young people to the formation of good habits. I urge them to keep clear of temptations. I affirm that every victory gained will make the next one easier, and all that I have said is true, but I am saddened by the fact that youth is not the only period of temptation, and that some who have apparently escaped the rocks of youth make an awful shipwreck in middle life. The defalcations that stagger the world are not the defalcations of youth. They are the gigantic frauds of middle life. Who are the anarchists and the heretics that inflame society and endanger the truth? They are, for the most part, men in their maturity. In how many cases is the sun eclipsed at noon!

What a chapter the great names of the Bible open! Here is Saul, who starts with fair promise, going to the devil—or, to

speak more exactly, to the witch, which amounted to the same thing—before he is out of his fifties. Here is David, with the blush of youth and innocence upon his cheek, singing the holiest songs that ever floated up to God from a pure soul; but when God lifts him to his throne, a man after his own heart, he falls from the throne to the mire and becomes a murderer to satisfy his lust. And in the new Testament it is Judas and Ananias and Demas—men in middle life—who make awful shipwreck of their souls after having once kept holy company. It had been a happy thing for the world if the volume of maturity's shipwrecks had closed with the New Testament, but, alas, the record is still going on. Machiavelli was forty-one when he came to promulgate his diabolical political cult. Arnold was forty when he became traitor to the country whose armies he had commanded. Aaron Burr was in his forties when he killed Hamilton and plotted for the betrayal of his country. Tweed was in his forties when he robbed New York of sixty-five millions, and the latest embezzler to shock

the world by stealing the funds of preachers' widows and orphans is a man not yet out of his fifties.

Since the Master's words proved true in the case of a man in middle life—"One of you shall betray me"—I shall be happy if any word of mine shall help to fortify a soul at the zenith of his powers against any temptation that may be peculiar to his age and time.

1. Let me remind you then that maturity is the period of the fiercest temptations. The animal propensities are at their strongest; the blood is hot and rushes like a torrent to the finger tips; the strain of what Joseph Cook calls the "fiery forties" is upon us. Passion of every kind leaps to the saddle and drives home its spurs. Maturity is headstrong and dominant. It is quick-tempered and brooks no restraint. It has the wilfulness of conscious strength. It presents opportunities that no other age presents, and so temptations from within are abetted by circumstances from without and there is but one result that can come to the unguarded. The story of David's fall

should be taken to heart by every man of David's temperament and David's success. Temptations to petty theft, to disturb the peace, to do the hot-blooded things of irresponsible immaturity belong to youth—the criminal classes, so called, are largely made up of those who are under twenty-five; but the more deliberate crimes which require time to perfect and which are dreadful in proportion to the interests involved—these are the crimes that belong more especially to maturity.

2. Another danger of middle life is that the actual will dominate the ideal. Youth is the period of high and holy purposes. If I wished to address an audience that would be most responsive to noble thoughts I would choose my audience from the young. It often happens in middle life that the inner light fails. Noble aspirations of youth are lost sight of. The cold, calculating present only receives attention. The red light of the morning has gone out of the sky. The dreams of youth no longer move us. Helpfulness, love, friendship—all these have been tried

with varying fortune. We have become critical and selfish. We distrust others because of our past experiences. The world takes on another cast and even the future loses the golden glow which once it had. Wordsworth has set the experience in such forceful form that his words always come to us as we think of the failing light:

"Heaven lies all about us in our infancy,
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy;
But he beholds the light and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy.
The youth who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day."

Many a man would give all his possessions if life only looked to him as once it did. If he could still see God and angels his step would bound where now it crawls. It is a sad thing when the angels come no more. Of old, Jacob with his head upon a stone had intercourse with heaven and woke to duty and delight, but our pillows

of down are but restless, and if we dream they are dreams of the world and the flesh and we wake only to hopeless toil.

Hood's poem is true for many of us:

"I remember, I remember,
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.
It was a childish ignorance
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy."

3. Maturity is the period of greatest responsibility. We have given hostages to fortune. We are in the productive age. Youth is the age of preparation; old age is the time of rest. If we are to have that rest we must gain the means for it now. Our children are to be fitted for life, to be educated and cared for until they can care for themselves. In view of all these facts the temptation is to make middle life a hot fight to press to the front at any cost. We talk about the survival of the fittest, and the fittest means the craftiest or the strongest, which is, in a moral sense, a contradiction of terms. Since the

competition is so great, we grow bitter toward our competitors and even toward our neighbors. We are fain to deny the calls of duty, of philanthropy, and of Christian service. We adopt such mottoes as "Every man for himself," and our hand becomes against every man and every man's hand against us. I pity the man who has grown to be a money-making machine or an adding-machine—a mere automaton which moves at the touch of a lever without purpose, love, or growth. The atrophy of noble powers cries out to heaven. There is no longer joy in nature or in art. The saints of literature have lost their power to move. The sweet amenities of social life are a burden and the daughters of music are brought low. Responsibility has slain the fairest children of the soul, and henceforth light and song and laughter come no more.

4. One of the saddest sights of middle life is a disappointed and discouraged man. I meet such every day and I am sure I am addressing such now. Others who had no better start than himself have succeeded. He sees the man who worked by his side as a clerk, at the head

of a business that pays him tens of thousands every year. That man, well fed and groomed, drives to his store at nine o'clock, while he crosses the bridge with the jostling sleepy crowd that sees the stars fade in the morning. Perhaps he was in business for himself. His partner was a rascal. The market went against him; fire consumed his savings, or sickness sapped his strength and he saw all his property go. His hair is frosted; his lip has the curl of the cynic; he suspects everybody and is jealous of everybody. He is ready to blame anybody and everybody for his failure. He is an uncomfortable man to have in the home or the church or the store. Nobody likes to have him about and he knows it. The world is out of joint. Even memory has a lash and hope is dead. Poor fellow! It is hard. Once he thought he would be a famous teacher, a great orator, a famous author, minister, lawyer, statesman. He would make a fortune. He had made up his mind how he would spend it. He would build a hall or a library, a school or a church in his native town. He would support an institute or a hospital in the city where he

had made his fortune. He did not mean to be selfish with what he gained, but it is all over. The time came when he had to lay his ambition in its grave and say with white lips, "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes." That is a critical time for any man. If he is a coward he will become a thief or an embezzler or a suicide. As you value your life, take a new account of stock and begin business for your soul. Some things are gone and some things have failed. What is left? The call of duty and the rewards which always come for duty done; the well done of God, which is better than the applause of men; the hope of heaven, which is better than the hope of sensual things. All you have tried to get you must have left behind you; the treasures in which you may still be rich are the treasures you can never lose.

"It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being meek than fierce;
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That after Last returns the First,
Tho a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blest once prove accurst."

The Gospel that I love to preach is the Gospel of another chance. Christ never gave up any one who did not refuse his chance. My disappointed friend, I am commissioned of God to say to you that the best things are ahead. You may yet be a rich man, a wise man, a strong man, and all that with the riches which are not tainted and the wisdom which does not pass away and the strength which never faileth.

XI

THE TREASURES OF OLD AGE

Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have declared thy strength to the next generation.—PSALM lxxi. 18.

DURING the last week we have basked in the sunlight of an Indian summer. There is the far-off murmur in the air of creaking wagons and the pounding of the horses' feet as the great harvests of boundless acres roll in to the granaries of the world. I count myself happy to look into the sweet contented faces of those whose spiritual granaries are full, and who revel in the mellow light of life's Indian summer.

An old man is like an old tree. He is the product of the storms and the zephyrs, the sunlight and the frost, of the hurtling years. I was born in the land of the oak and the elm; where the hills are steep

and the storms are many; where the lone tree bends like a wand of willow in the wild sweep of the winds, and storms of ice mutilate the great branches. There for years the great trees have braved the winds and look young after the passing of a century. There, as a boy in college, I saw the elm under which Whitefield preached and the one where Washington took command of the American army. I picked apples from the trees which were planted in the wilderness by Quittumug, the Indian, from seed he received as pay for the corn he carried to Boston, sixty miles on foot, in the days of the famine. I revere those trees, but I reverence far more a human life, the product of sunlight and storm, of strain and heartache, of contest and victory. Such a man wearing his gray hair as a halo of righteousness is a witness of the innumerable mercies of God. So the psalmist prays that he may be spared to give his testimony to the generations that shall follow him. "Behold in me," he says, "the evidence that God is a refuge and strength, and that a man whose life is kept green by

the sunlight of God shall still bring forth fruit in old age." Every such man becomes a miracle of God to cheer the doubting heart and to strike the simple solemn.

There is enough in aching limbs and failing eyes and stumbling feet to remind you of the limitations and burdens of the aged. I would like to remind you of some of the treasures which belong to old age.

1. I will mention first the treasures of the mind. The wisest men and women are the old. The accumulations of youth and middle life are stored away. The fortunes of the brain grow by steady accumulation, and for this nothing but years will suffice. Works of imagination may belong to youth. In the fields of romance and poetry youth has won great triumphs, but in history and philosophy age and experience win the palm.

> "Age is opportunity no less
> Than youth itself, tho in another dress;
> And as the evening twilight fades away,
> The sky is filled with stars invisible by day."

Timothy Dwight, in his "Memories of Yale," tells the story of the great old men of that university—Kingsley, Silliman, Woolsey, Porter, Harris, Loomis—who made the college what it is.

It is doubtless true that strength and ardor gradually cease—of desire, of feeling, of passion, of force; but the intellect continues to grow with accretions of knowledge. The achievements of old age are a lasting incentive and cheer to those who feel its approach. Open your biographies and what do you find? Michelangelo working on St. Peter's at eighty-seven; Titian painting at ninety-nine, when cut off by the plague; Hobbes still writing well at ninety-two; Bentham at eighty-five and Goethe at eighty-four. West painted his best work at seventy-nine; Humboldt worked till he was nearly ninety, and Bancroft reached the same age; Dandolo was elected Doge of Venice at eighty-four. When ninety-four and blind, he stormed Constantinople and died Doge at ninety-seven.

The great statesmen and judges have reveled in old age in the treasures of a

well-stored mind. Lord Eldon died at eighty-six, Brougham at ninety; Palmerston died prime minister at eighty-one; Lord Mansfield died at eighty-nine.

The treasures of knowledge belong to old age, but old age does not vaunt itself. Intoxicated with the first quaff of knowledge, youth boasts of its wisdom; but old age, seeing the vast ocean of undiscovered truth, looks upon its accumulations as only a little thing.

2. Old age is rich in the treasures of memory. How you are imprest with that as you talk with our good gray friend, Doctor Cuyler, or read his "Recollections of a Long Life!" When the fire burns low, and the feet go but slowly to new joys; when the eye grows dim to new sights, and the heart responds to new joy with a sober beat; then the halls of memory swing open, the old faces fill all the air—the old songs and the old shouts and the old joys. The child looks in at the door and says: "Grandma is alone, but I heard her talking." Dear heart, she does not know that grandma is holding a reception this afternoon. It is her wed-

ding reception. The smell of orange blossoms is in the air. The arm on which she leaned for forty years is slipping around his wife for the first time, and the first kiss of the bridegroom is on her lips. The old lovelight is in the dim eyes, and the heart that beats but slowly under present joy throbs until the old hand shakes at the trooping joys of memory.

How rich you are! All the ships of memory are sailing your way. Memory, like a good landscape gardener, hides the dark and rugged places of the journey, and we look only on fair fields and pleasant vistas.

"And when the stream which overflowed the soul has
passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left
Deposited on the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts
That shall not die, and can not be destroyed."

You think you are poor. Make a bargain with me. For how much will you sell the memories of childhood and youth? How much for a baby's crowing in the cradle? How much for love's first message, and the happy years when you

rocked the cradle and mixt the bread and worked on the farm or in the shop or the store and watched the children come to man's estate? And, Christian, what will you take for your recollections of the mercy-seat, for Bethel and Peniel; for your Carmels of conquests and your Hermons of transfiguration? What would you take and never sing any more: "Oh! happy day that fixt my choice"; blot out the recollection of "Jesus sought me when a stranger," "Blest be the tie that binds?"

No, no; there are no holy memories for sale. They are priceless in their value, the happy treasure of the saints. No thief can steal them; the gnawing tooth of rust and time can not destroy them.

> "Earth still has music left in store,
> While memory sighs and sings."

3. But even more precious are the riches of character. Character is the precipitate from the stream of conduct. The years run by as sand in the stream where the old miners stood to wash for gold. That which is left behind is the real value of the passing years.

In the nature of things no character can be so well rounded and so nobly developed as that of old age. It takes one set of graces for youth and quite another for the days "when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves and those that look out of the windows be darkened." It is much to be brave in the time of battle. It is even more to be patient in the time of adversity. Napoleon at Jena and Austerlitz was a hero, but at St. Helena he was crusht, ill-tempered, and morose. It takes a great soul to cheerfully make place for another in the race of life, to accept gracefully the inevitable, and to let another do the work that we feel sure we can do better ourselves. But it is poor wine that grows sour with age. Character, like fruit, must have frost to ripen it. God lets us grow old to show the world how He can sustain us and make us sweet and ripe. It is not the purpose of life to grow a tree which shall so run its roots into the ground and take hold of a rock and sod that it can not be separated from the soil. Its purpose is rather to ripen a

heavenly harvest, so the Christian shall at last drop from the boughs of life into the lap of God like mellow fruit. Old age sets the crowning glory to character.

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new life through chinks that Time has made;
Stronger by weakness wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home."

4. The greatest of the treasures of age are the treasures of hope. It was a most beautiful saying of Oliver Wendell Holmes, whom I knew well in his eighty-fifth year, that "the relations of man with his Maker grow more intimate and confidential with advancing years." If the past cheers the fainting heart of age, the future challenges and beckons it—weakness facing eternal strength; the changing facing the changeless life; the tear-stains to be wiped away, the injustice ended, the pain to cease, the friendless to find the old friends, the separated to be mated! "It is better so. I shall miss your voice, but you will be nearer to me than speech can bring you. I shall not hear your footfall, for you will float before me

on seraphic wing, and I shall come on after you till I, too, shall drop my cane for wings of light." Do not be in a hurry to go nor feel that you stay too long.

Winter may be on your head, but keep eternal summer in your soul. If only your heart is warm you may carry cheerfulness and love with you "into the teens of your second century, if you can last so long." God is letting you stay after your threescore and ten that you may show His might to the generations that follow you. Then magnify His grace, triumphant o'er your fears. Do not fret that your eyes get dim; God is so busy getting a new mansion for you that He is not especially concerned to repair the windows of the old one. Moving day is not far off! The hand that shakes so it can no longer hold the earthly tools will be quite another thing when it grasps the harp of heaven.

"Let hope lift every sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime,
Lowly, faithful, banish fear,
'Right onward drive unharmed;
The port well worth the risk is near,
And every wave is charmed.'"

He who hath been with thee hitherto will not forsake thee as the home-land draws near. He who gave thee the treasures of mind and memory and enriched thee with the far-off harvest of tears will lead you at last to your eternal inheritance. He does not ask you for the toil of middle life. Be thankful for that, and remember, "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff." He only asks that you may vindicate his care and mercy by showing a triumphant and happy spirit in the great tests of age. The solemn but glorious transfiguration is a day of crowning for you. Bear yourself like a king or queen, for your throne is great and eternal. You have fought a good fight; you have kept the faith. Prove yourself as good a soldier on guard as you were in battle. Wait like a hero in confidence till the triumphal procession is called for; then tramp up the boulevards of heaven, with saints and martyrs for fellow victors and the innumerable company of angels for spectators. When our boys came home from the war they passed

through the capital and our governor reviewed them, but after that they broke ranks and the waiting wife was on her husband's neck and the children pushing for a place at papa's cheek. For all you or I know, it may be so when the victors get to heaven.

In the brave days of Greece the runner carried a torch in his hand and when he had reached his bounds passed it into the hands of the next runner. So you pass on to those who come after you the torch of a holy life. Be sure to keep it burning. Never lay it down in the dust; never go so slow that there will be no breath to fan it. Keep the light burning and when another shall take it from your nerveless hand may the gleam of it send him bounding on his way.

XII

THE PRACTISE OF PRAYER

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.—JAMES iv. 8.

IF we wish to know the value of prayer whom shall we question? Certainly not the man who never prays. Of this matter it is evident that he who truly prays most knows most. We shall, therefore, find the most tangible results of prayer where there is most of the blessed training in the school of prayer. No training in the Christian life is to be compared with this. When one has learned how to pray he has learned the greatest secret of the Christian life. There is deep truth in the hymn we sing:

"Prayer is appointed to convey,
The blessings God designs to give;
Long as they live should Christians pray,
They learn to pray when first they live."

Our great schools have their mottoes—legends engraved upon their seals and

over their arches. The portal of the school of prayer has on its outer side: "Not as I will but as thou wilt," and on the inner side: "According to your faith be it unto you." When the child enters school its first lesson is one of obedience and trust. It must accept the superior wisdom of the teacher often on what may seem to it inadequate reasons. The fact that he is the teacher makes it obvious to the scholar that he has superior wisdom. The scholar will learn the solutions of his problems only by trusting that wisdom. So in the school of prayer one does not matriculate for the purpose of giving God information. Many a poor student has found that out at bitter cost. Such a student has no use for prayer unless he can get what he wants. He says: "If I can not get what I ask for I might as well not ask." He knows what he wishes and is direct and importunate. The Master must first teach him the A B C of prayer. Our student would not put it thus even to himself, but he really by his attitude puts infinite wisdom and power at the caprice of his own ignorance.

You remember the story of Phaethon, son of Phœbus, who wished as a proof of his kingly descent to drive the steeds of his father. The father attempts to dissuade him. "Take anything else but this"—but the headstrong son refuses all advice. "It is not honor but destruction you seek"—but still he will have his desire. He mounts the lofty chariot as the dawn throws open the purple doors of the east. The steeds dart forward, cleaving the clouds and outrunning the morning breezes. With a light hand on them they rush headlong among the fleeing stars. He knows not how to guide them, nor if he knew has he the power. The clouds smoke, the mountain tops take fire, the rivers are dried up, and the waters are consumed and Phaethon falls headlong to his fate. Would any man undertake to furnish the victim for such a tragedy? Shall a man who can not guide his own life undertake to guide God's universe?

It would be no mercy on the part of God to put the tremendous engine of prayer into the hands of an ignorant and

erring mortal and He does not do it. Rest assured of that. Rest assured you are not strong enough or wise enough or good enough to dam up God's cisterns, or drive His sun. If God inspires you to pray for rain He will answer your prayer, but you will have to be much in prayer in order to get the message that God may send. He who thinks that he has simply to make up his mind what he wants and ask for it, has no true conception of what prayer is; nothing could be more harmful to himself. It would transfer omnipotence and omniscience from its seat in the Godhead, and make God but the purveyor of the universe who grants what selfishness may order. "What!" says our student, "can I not get what I want when I pray?" O foolish one and slow of heart. Would you have a poor second choice when God can give you the best? Is your own wisdom better than the wisdom of God?

If then we trust the wisdom and love of the Master we are ready to enter the school of prayer. "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." Ah, what words are these!—to draw near to God.

Will He give me audience? It is hard to find great men here, difficult to present one's petition, more difficult to get an answer. Will the King of kings spare time for me? "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." Oh, the blessedness of coming into the audience chamber of the King! Do you talk about dulness in prayer? Think of Daniel. A man must like a thing when he would rather have it than his life. I should like to have heard the prayer that went up to God which was worth more to Daniel than his life. Would it be any denial to you not to pray? Daniel felt he could not live without prayer and was therefore ready to die for it.

Well has a great man said: "If you truly pray, one of two things must happen: your praying will make you stop sinning or your sinning will make you stop praying."

The highest kind of prayer is too sacred to share with any one but God. Jesus went apart.

Draw near to God. I wish you would have, like Daniel, a time for the practise

of prayer. I know one can pray without ceasing and I know what is said about "all life is worship"; but unless you have some time to pray you will be likely soon to have no time to pray. I know the key sometimes turns hard in the lock of prayer; but it is rusted on the human, not on the divine side.

Let me remind you of the blessedness of heart communion. Is there anybody on earth or in heaven that you love to talk with? Any soul wiser or purer or sweeter than your own? Is it like a green spot in the desert to hold converse with Him? Did you part feeling ready to take up again the battle of life, to be true and stedfast, stout and brave? Did the stars burn brighter and the sky seem clearer? Was there a bounding hope within and was life worth living? That was good for you. I hope you have still one heart that loves you and that you can talk to; and better still, if that heart is wise enough to be your guide, you will not be hopeless nor homeless. But multiply all that a thousandfold and you can not reach the glorious communion and fellowship which the practise of prayer will give you.

It is something to have the friendship of noble men; it is infinitely more to reach the altitude of friendship with God. The practise of prayer! You can not long associate with a person without being imprest by him; the man who communes with God must come to look at things as God looks at them, and this is the supreme reward of prayer.

In this world hearing and speech go together. The deaf are also dumb. It is not otherwise in the language of God's kingdom. "To give utterance to certain wishes and plead certain promises is an easy thing and can be learned by human wisdom, but to pray in the spirit, to speak words that reach and touch God, such praying depends upon our hearing God's voice. Just as far as we listen to the voice and language that God speaks shall we learn to speak in the voice and language that God hears."

"Talk with us, Lord, thyself reveal,
While here o'er earth we rove;
Speak to our hearts and let us feel
The kindling of thy love."

It will result from such praying that we shall have faith in God. We shall feel that altho we are hemmed in on every side there is always a clear sky over us and a heaven that bends to our need. There is no bed so stony and no pillow so hard that God does not set up a ladder to heaven crowded with angels to come and go. That will take the sting out of every bitterness. It will give resignation in every dark experience. We can take up our burden without complaining and bear it without fatigue, when we keep tryst with God.

"With thee conversing we forget
All time and toil and care;
Labor is rest and pain is sweet,
If Thou, my God, art there."

Tell Him all about the perplexities of business and the anxious forebodings. Tell Him of the heartache and sorrow. "Casting all your care on him for he careth for you." Prayer will make you mighty in faith as faith will make you mighty in prayer. But do not go away too soon. If you do you will go empty-handed and God's express office may have a valu-

able package for you that will remain unclaimed.

When my friend and I are separated we often call each other up on the telephone. He is almost two hundred miles away and the cities and towns are many on the way. I must wait until there is a clear wire and perfect communication. Often I am impatient with calling into the unresponsive wire, but at last I hear his voice and his message of love. For that I was waiting. If I had given up a moment before it came I might as well not have called at all. Do not get off your knees until God talks back. Jacob wrestled all night and got His blessing. He would have been in a sad plight if he had stopt before the blessing came. It is worth waiting or wrestling a long night through if we can have our name and nature changed at the breaking of the dawn. Bishop Coke spent six hours in sleep, six in law, and four in prayer. Sir William Jones wrote:

"Seven hours to law,
To soothing slumber seven;
Ten to the world allot,
And all to heaven."

Prayer will give us power over our temptations. When it seems as if the love for some evil thing would master you betake yourself to prayer. Then your eye will be clear. You will see that the wicked stand in slippery places. The hideous face of the evil will be unmasked. The fearful consequences of transgression will be made plain. The grip of the evil will be broken; the love for it will change to hatred. God will save you from the sirens, and in place of an awful shipwreck you will sail away with a safe Pilot into God's quiet seas.

Prayer will inspire you for service. As you are busy presenting your petitions to God for your needs, you will overhear the cry of a desolate world. It will occur to you, under the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, that much of that wickedness is within your reach; that you can help to answer many a prayer. You will hear Christ say, "I gave my life for thee, what hast thou given for me?" You will learn that God's method of redeeming the world is through the aid of His children. You will feel a great duty and a cor-

responding woe if you do not meet it. And the same agency that inspires you with the need will supply you grace to meet it.

When a rich Christian proposed that they pray for a certain sum of money, Mr. Moody said, "Had not you better just give that yourself and not trouble God about it?"

The one thing that will maintain your zeal in a cold world, that will make you grow in grace, that will give you faith in God, in His wisdom, purposes and final triumph, that will break your temptations, keep you safe in the fiery furnace and give you power to win men to God, is the practise of prayer. Men may scheme and plan, they may make earthly friends, they may deny themselves rest and comfort, they may wear themselves out in weary beatings against their cage, they may cry against their fate and sink defeated under it; but as for us, we will look aloft and say, "Let us pray."

III
THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

I

THE LORD'S PRAYER

After this manner therefore pray ye.—MATT. vi. 9.

TENNYSON sings with the emphasis of profound thought:

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand,
What you are, root and all, and all in all
I should know what God and man is."

As the flower holds the mystery of God in nature, so this brief prayer, the contemplation of which we begin this morning, holds the mystery of God in grace. It presents in epitome the entire system of life and doctrine which Jesus came to unfold. A lifetime is none too long for the contemplation and practise of its sublime truths. What we can say in the limits of a few brief discussions will only be a hint and suggestion of the riches to be found

here by him who will seek with the attentive heart of a seeker after priceless gems.

This is a prayer. We must then ask ourselves, What is it to pray? We shall have our answer as this prayer unfolds, but we hasten to say at the very beginning of our study that petition is only the secondary object of true prayer. Its primary purpose is thanksgiving, confession, and adoration. All this is summed up in the word communion. We do not go to God for some gift, and importune Him until He complies with our complaint. He only truly prays who goes upon his knees to find God's will concerning himself. It is more important for me to find out from God what I ought to have, than for me to tell God what I wish Him to give. Prayer is not so much a petition as an altitude of the soul. It is an atmosphere—the Christian's vital breath. I go to talk with God. I must not come away until He talks back. The end of prayer is to change eyes with God—to look at things from His standpoint and to hush my selfish impatience in the presence of His perfect wisdom and love.

This is called the Lord's Prayer because He taught it, not because He used it. He could never have offered it as His own petition for He had never sinned and hence could not pray to be forgiven. If He, the sinless One, prayed, there is certainly need for us to do so, and we shall spend no time in arguing as to the duty, the dignity and the utility of prayer. If we are to be taught how to pray, who shall teach us? Evidently he who has prayed oftenest and most successfully. If you will read the gospel record of Jesus's life you will be surprized to note what an important part prayer plays in it. Jesus of Nazareth was not a good sleeper. The stars knew Him well; the wilderness also and the sobbing sea. It was in solitude that He fought His battles and gained His victories. He therefore spoke from His own experience when He said, "Your Father which seeth in secret shall reward you openly." It was prayer which transformed His soul and made Him fit to be transfigured.

There are many prayers recorded in the Bible whose words we wish we knew:

the prayer of Jacob when his name was changed; the prayer of Elijah which locked up the fountains of heaven; and that other prayer which opened the cisterns of the skies. What words did Daniel use when the spies were at his door and the lions warring for their prey? To have these and such like prayers would be a blessed thing indeed, but we have something better. We have the prayer He taught who routed our mortal enemy in a forty days' battle; who prayed at the door of a sepulcher and Lazarus came back to life; who prayed in Gethsemane till the bitterness went out of His awful cup and His strength failed not at cross or grave.

The prayer that such a Man will teach may well be the model for us all. Let us look at it. How wonderful is its completeness! The first part unfolds the infinite riches of God; the second part the infinite poverty of man. Here is its perface: "After this manner pray ye." That is, first of all be brief. It was a belief common to many religions that there was virtue in a long prayer. Gentiles as well as

Jews were reproved when told that they were not heard for their much-speaking. This prayer is a protest against all vain repetitions. It is not time and volume that make up the prevailing form of prayer. The cry of the publican is answered, while the Pharisee ends his long prayer as empty-handed as he began it.

Again, it is to be used as a formula, but is not to be the occasion of formality. It is a model and not a mold. No argument for a liturgy can be based upon it. It was not meant that we should always pray in these exact words, for in the two records we have of this prayer the words used are not identical. Nor is it meant that every time we pray we should of necessity add these words to ours. In broad terms, here is the outline of true prayer. Catch the spirit of it and pray as the spirit moves.

II

OUR FATHER

Our Father which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.—MATT. vi. 9.

"OUR FATHER." What new word is this? What shaft of prayer was ever winged with such a feather? To be sure, even heathen have spoken of God as their father and Paul quotes Aratus, one of their poets, as saying: "For we are also His offspring." But he uses the words as a heathen poet. The Old Testament knows nothing of God the Father as the lover of the soul. The Jews worshiped a God whose name one might not speak and live. They knew Him by the name He gave to Moses: "I am that I am"—the great Jehovah. He was Elohim, the ruler; El Elyon the Most High; El Shaddai the Almighty. David prayed to Him as King, but nowhere are prayers addrest to Him with the tenderness and trust with which the confident and loving child approaches his father.

Jesus touches a chord silent until now —"Our Father." The bravest and wisest of us are but children—ignorant and helpless.

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

He is our Father by creation. We are all His offspring. "All things were made by him." But we come nearer to Him than that. Between the Creator and the creation there is of necessity no likeness. Not so with a father and his child. In this case it is his likeness which proclaims the relation.

We are His by preservation. His tender mercies are over all His works. He has shielded us from a thousand dangers and ministered unto us in thousands of ways. His gracious providences are new every morning and renewed every evening, and we rejoice in no blessing that does not flow from His thoughtful hand.

We are His by adoption. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have defaced His workmanship and His image

and become children of wrath. All men can claim God as Father by virtue of His creation and preservation, but only those who have experienced His new creation can call Him Father by "gracious adoption." John puts it clearly and most impressively when he says: "To as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

Our Father! That is not the God of the pantheist or the mystic. He is a tender and loving personality—too wise to err, too good to be untrue. Our Father! How blessed to be able to say it and to feel it, when He shrouds Himself in mystery; when the air is filled with storm and all earthly hopes fail; when the dear faces fade out of our sight and we walk our *via dolorosa* alone. Not man alone nor God apart is the proper relation of the human and divine, but God with us and within us making us strong for the day of trial. He prepares the soil, we scatter the seed; He waters and nourishes it, we reap and garner it, and we never outrun the imminent God, our Father and Friend.

Our Father. That teaches the brotherhood of man. "If thou prayest for thyself alone, thou alone prayest for thyself," said the good Ambrose. Nothing that interests humanity can be foreign to us. The maiden in the palace prays for the miner in the mine and the sailor on the sea; the saint in the hovel prays for the sinner in the palace, and each says: "*Our* Father." Employer and employed, proprietor and clerk, mistress and servant, rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, must each remember the other, and out of a tender heart whose affections are deep enough to drown anger and selfishness and hate must say: "*Our* Father."

We must not despair, for God is our Father. You may have fallen before some great temptation; men may turn from you with hate upon their faces; but God is still your Father, yearning over you with a love that stopt not at the cross itself. Be of good cheer. Answer the touch of love which your soul already feels. It is the Father's hand; He will lift you up.

God is your Father. Do not demean yourself. A king's son must not behave himself like a boor. He must fit himself for the royal companionship of the king's palace. Nothing base and mean was meant to have place in your heart. Nourish your self-respect and live worthy of your station. Our Father—two short words, but if we can truly say them we have come a long way into the heart of this prayer.

Our Father "which art in heaven." We are mounting now. The world hedges us in on every side. We seem to be prisoners beating ourselves against the cold walls of the material, but the blue is always overhead, and angels can find the way to every narrow cell and dreary Patmos. It is quite the fashion in our time to deprecate and depreciate any reference to heaven. We are not to think of it or live for it. Heaven is here and now, and any place of white throne and virgin splendor is but a mystic's dream. Not so taught Jesus of Nazareth. Sun and moon and stars—the heavenly bodies—rule this earth of ours. They lift our tides and

rule our seasons and keep us on our course among the worlds. So the heavenly attractions keep our souls in place. The shadow of God's throne must lie across the home, the shop, the school, the ballot-box, "as well as over the pillow where one lays down his throbbing head to die, and over the grave where he has left the body of wife or child to molder back to dust."

Heaven is but a strange city to most of us until our dear ones go to occupy its mansions. Then it becomes to us the home-land, and an ardent longing takes hold of our souls to walk the blessed streets where God the Father and our kindred are. Some noble families have titles but no estates. It is not so with the children of God. The inheritance of the just is glorious, reserved for them in heaven.

"Hallowed be thy name." To hallow is to render sacred and holy." The Jew would not tread upon a piece of paper lest the name of God be written upon it; but that is only a poor conception of the way to dishonor the *name*. To think unworthy of Him, to make unworthy

prayers to Him, to act as if He were not or as if we cared not for Him—this is to dishonor His name. We are to hallow His name by the thoughts of our hearts, by the words of our lips. We are to give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness, and we are to tell the truth concerning His wondrous love as revealed to us. We are to hallow His name by the works of our hands. By all loving charities and usefulness we will make His name a holy thing among men. All the blessed institutions of the Gospel are named from Him. His day, His book, His church, must be held holy and sacred if we would honor and hallow His name. So the first cry of the soul in this model prayer is not for self, for ease, or welfare; it is a cry for God. The first and most radiant Pleiad of the seven petitions is this: "Hallowed be thy name."

III

THY KINGDOM COME

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.—MATT. vi. 10.

STILL we wonder at the marvelous sight of a man who prays, and yet asks nothing for himself. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," was the lofty cry of our first meditation, and our second is like unto it, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." *Thy* kingdom, and not mine; *Thy* will, and not my will.

Thy kingdom come—not the kingdom which some had longed for under a frail and erring king, but the kingdom of One who knoweth His subjects and calleth them by name; who laid down His life for them; who stretches out His hand, not with a rod of iron or a heavy scepter, but with love and invitation and with all gracious concern. When we look about us and see so much of evil; when we find so many whose hearts grow cold to their friends;

when we find rulers, presidents, and governors who fail to understand the high principles of their office; and when the fire burns low in our own heart, friend after friend departs, hope has but one chapter more, and we see all the things that we had cherished in this world slip away from us,—then every heart is fain to cry in the face of all injustice, oppression, and sorrow, "Thy kingdom come."

Thy kingdom! What is the kingdom of God? Certainly not that petty kingdom which so many in His time talked about and expected, and in whose interest the watcher still paces on the walls of Tiberius above beautiful Gennesaret; not a kingdom in which John should have the portfolio of state, and Thomas should be lord of the treasury; not a kingdom in which His disciples should wield earthly, physical power; something far otherwise than a kingdom of such brief authority and such partial rule and power.

It is not the second coming of our Lord that is referred to here. Whatever one may think about the spectacular second coming of Jesus as Christ; whatever may

be said about the nearness of that hour when He shall appear and bring His chosen with Him; tho sometimes I know our hearts, in the midst of their sorrows, are fain to pray, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus," it is certainly true that Jesus did not refer to this in His prayer, "Thy kingdom come." We are not to expect, therefore, a kingdom of earthly circumstances, for He affirmed again and again, "My kingdom is not of this world." Nor are we to think that He refers here to the building up of that kingdom in which church and state shall be united, nor that kingdom where organized churches shall have authority among men. Churches will be built; authority will be exercised; but all this is only secondary—it is not in the purpose of this wonderful prayer, "Thy kingdom come." What is the kingdom of God to which this prayer refers? What did Christ Himself say about it?

He shows us that the principles of that kingdom are opposed to the principles of this world. We honor our rich and powerful men, and count them of supreme importance among us, but Jesus said that

in His kingdom these would have no place whatever. He said it was harder for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. He says yet further, by the way of emphasis, that His kingdom is not eating nor drinking, but that it is "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These three immaterial things are the basic principles of His kingdom.

When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we are asking, first of all, that righteousness may everywhere prevail; that the opprest may have a chance; that we may go out into life, not as one man against the world, but conscious that all the powers in earth and sky are working for righteousness and in our behalf. So whenever a man prays, "Thy kingdom come," he solemnly pledges himself to do all in his power to bring righteousness to the front, to set at liberty those that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. That is the very first thing that comes with the kingdom of our Lord.

We have not gone far into this prayer,

and yet many a lip will falter as it undertakes to phrase this petition. Are you ready to meet men as brothers? Are you ready to deal with them justly and truly? Then you are in condition to offer that prayer. "Righteousness and peace"—the peace which comes when all hearts are united on some blessed basis of truth; the peace which comes not when the strong has crusht the weak man into silence, nor when the weak man is so feeble that he dare not lift himself to oppose oppression, but when, on every side, men do the will of God in heart and life, seeking only that there may be the perfect peace which those hearts know who get the spring and motive of their action out of the Word of God!

This kingdom is revealed through the Holy Spirit. No man comes into it as a member except he be inducted under the hand of that gracious Spirit. No man knows this divine love, unless he himself is moved upon by the Spirit of God. There are men who accept the inevitable, but there is no joy in that; there are men who go up and down life with their teeth

grimly set to bear the things they have to bear, but there is no joy in that. The kingdom of God will be set up among men only when we take delight in the service of our King; when men everywhere, instead of bowing at the shrine of lust and power and avarice and of all human desires, shall find their chiefest joy in lifting up their hearts unto Him who is the life and the light of the world, King of all hearts, Lover of all men, Jesus, the crystal Christ, the Son of the Almighty God.

God himself shall be over all and joy shall reach every heart. That is the kingdom of heaven. That is what we mean when we pray, "Thy kingdom come" —motives of every kind conceived in righteousness, the purpose of every man to bring peace and joy into this world of ours. How many breaking hearts there are; how many people who need a kind word and a little sympathy and a hand to help them out of the troubles into which they have fallen. Would it not be a beautiful thing if all men loved each other; if, instead of seeking our own way, we could rise to the blessed altitude of desir-

ing that all men might be as happy as are we; that all men might find the peace which we enjoy and every blessing that crowns our lives might also crown theirs? If you mean that in your heart, if you are anxious to see that come, then, whenever you fall upon your knees, pray in absolute heart-surrender and in perfect sincerity, "Thy kingdom come."

The second part of this petition it seems to me may almost be called a specification under the first part. God's kingdom will never come until the will of God is done in and through every heart. If the first petition is general, the second is specific. If the first refers to men in the aggregate, the second refers to the individual heart and the individual life. "Thy will be done." There are a class of people who never use the phrase, "The will of God," that it does not mean some awful thing. Ruskin, you will remember, says that people talk about the will of God as if it meant the snatching of their babies from them and the loading of them with some unbearable burden. So we talk about bearing the will of God, and, if there is

any great calamity that falls upon us, we try to comfort ourselves by saying that it must be His will.

There are many pious platitudes spoken and acted concerning the will of God. Doctor Gladden pictures a man sitting on the hillside and watching a boulder come rushing down toward the place where he is sitting. He folds his hands and says, "My time has come; it must be the will of God that my life end here." "Get up and get out of the way"; that is the message I would shout in his ear. "It is not the will of God that the stone should crush you. He gave you notice by the noise of its coming, in time for you to get out of the way." There is a man who has made a bad investment and lost his money; or he has conducted his business in such a way that by combinations of one sort or another he has to face failure. He throws up his hands and says, "I must be a poor man, for it is the will of God." Nothing of the sort! He has given you powers to try again; He has given you opportunities to rise to your feet and accomplish some great and

blessed thing—at any rate, to show yourself a man.

So when one complains about his fortune, or about ill health which he has brought upon himself, and which he is constantly keeping up by his own indolence, I can not help saying to those who cry it is the will of God, "How do you know it is the will of God?" It is not His will we should be sick—He would rather have us well. It is not His desire that any man should be crusht in accident—He would rather that all men should be saved. But, if there are cases in which, God being the secondary and not the primary cause, these things do come upon us and there is absolutely no relief for us, then we may understand what the gracious will of God may be to us in the midst of our misfortunes and our sorrows. God wants every man to be stedfast, to be true and faithful, and it is His will concerning us that we should use all our powers in every way to accomplish the great things that He made possible for us.

"Thy will be done." That looks as if there were something aggressive, rather

than passive, in it. Thy will, not be suffered, but be done. You thought it meant simply to cry to God that He should do His will in you. That is not the petition at all. There is something more to come that limits and defines the whole question of the will of God. It looks as if somebody must pluck up his spirits. It looks as if somebody must tighten his girdle and must put on anew his sandals and gain strength afresh for great and holy purposes. If you wish to look upon this matter of God's will from your own personal standpoint, may I ask you the question, when you put up this petition, if you have reached the place where you are willing in all holy things to surrender yourself to the will of God working in you? Are you willing to be what God would like you to be? That, I think, is the first qualification for doing what the Lord would like you to do. I see so many who undertake to do a great work with a little strength, and the work is feebly done and it means but little in the end. What we need is to be conscious of the enduement of power from on high and to feel

that we have surrendered ourselves to God's providences that are sweeping our way, so that we may be helped on and upward to great and holy things.

Thy will be done in me! Take out of me, by any process that may be necessary, the mean and selfish heart which has been growing there so long. Adjust my eyes to see the things which are afar off; and if, in the will of God, they whom I have loved slip out of my sight and are no longer with me, to realize that they have left behind them an open path, and that I should journey on after them until I see the city into which they have entered and come to be a citizen of that same blessed paradise. Can we all of us rise to the height of that sweet song of Faber's?—

"I worship Thee, sweet will of God,
And all Thy ways adore;
And every day I live I seem
To love Thee more and more.
Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right which seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will."

After we have done our best to avert all evils, then we rest ourselves in the hand of God with perfect resignation.

The last expression of my text defines and limits the whole theme which so far we have presented. Doctor Harper, and others of the critics, make this phrase of which I am about to speak cover all the prayer from the first petition to this one. "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." How is the will of God done in heaven? I answer, it is done voluntarily. In this world, God's purposes are sometimes accomplished by those who do not do them voluntarily. God used again and again, in the history of the world, men like Alexander and Cæsar and other great rulers, to accomplish His purposes, but they were not voluntary actors. In His hands they were used, but in ways that they did not understand. God has even used those who absolutely refused to do His will, so that out of their lives His will has come. Shall we be of that spirit in the doing of God's will among men?

The will of God is done in heaven

consciously. In this world, God's sentences are sometimes very long. There are a thousand years between the subject and the predicate. But in heaven, the feet of the reapers tread upon the heels of those who scatter the seed. They do the will of God with absolute surrender, with perfect consciousness of His purpose, giving themselves up to His sweet will.

The will of God is done in heaven without reservation. Each one of those who work the purpose of God does it with absolute abandon, holding back no part of the price, and we are praying that we may do the same in this world; that we may ask no bargain with God as to our surrender, but give ourselves entirely into His hands.

The will of God in heaven is done joyously. It must be so; each angel vying with every other angel to speed upon the message and mission of God; each heart so sweet in its surrender that nothing more beautiful can be than the will of God; each one knowing that His will is the perfect will, nor asking a second

choice, when the best choice is theirs. Doing the will of God with utmost joy; finding the rarest delight in it—this indeed is heaven. Here we do God's will, but very often as men do work under a taskmaster. In heaven, where from center to circumference there is nothing but righteousness and peace and joy, they do the will of God, but they do it only in such fashion as we are praying every day we may be able to do it here.

What is the use of our offering up the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," if we then go out to be mean and niggardly in our service and in our surrender? How can a man talk about God's will being done here in this world, and refuse to put himself into the breach to fight God's battle? How can any man go on stacking up his money in the bank, while God's causes suffer, and the poor are in need, and everywhere there is the crying of the lonely and the desolate, and he has the means to give, and yet he folds his hands over his pocket and says with sanctimonious gaze, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done?"

If God's will should be done, what is to become of him? If God's will should be done in this world, how would you and I fare if we refuse to play our part in the purpose of God and hold selfishly the things that He has given us? Again, how many of us are there who would be willing to give up a five or a ten-dollar bill for some cause, when we are not willing to go to the prayer-meeting and the class-meeting and the service of God's house and to the house where our neighbor lives to carry the Gospel to him, and with a yearning soul to say, "I long to see you have in your heart the same blessed peace that is in mine?" How can we pray, "Thy kingdom come," if we are doing nothing to make it come? How can we say, "Thy will be done," in the salvation of men, when we are doing absolutely nothing to have that will accomplished in the lives of those that are about us?

We are praying for ourselves that we may be harnessed into the purpose of God; that the kingdom which cometh not with observation, which has no flaunting banners and no beating drums, which

drags at its chariot wheels no fettered captives, in the forefront of which walks a Man with pierced hands, who is the King—that this kingdom may come. We ask that the King—who is able to make fettered men free and bad men good; who is to take those who are bound in the slavery of all unholy things and make them pure-lipped and pure-hearted, like the angels of God—may come. We ask that the will of God may be wrought in our own souls; that our shackles may fall off, and our polluted hearts become clean; that we may go out to work the purpose of God in the blessed victory of the world, with the same pure-hearted joy that they know—the saints and the angels of God—who stand this morning in white around the throne where we hope one day to meet them.

Thy kingdom come. It will come. Who says it will not? Just as sure as the sun rises, that kingdom is to come. God has not begun the subjugation of this world to righteousness to find at the last that He undertook too great a work, and to say to the assembled universe, "I began a

contract which I can not complete." He who came to win the world will accomplish it. The kingdom which He came to set up will be set up, and all nations shall own, either as conquerors or conquered, the universal victory of Christ the King.

IV

OUR DAILY BREAD

Give us this day our daily bread.
—MATT. vi. 11.

THERE are two plans on which men conduct their lives. The first is to win a livelihood and trust that somehow they may happen to do God's will. The other is to make it one's first concern to serve God, and trust that, in doing so, bread will be given. Which have we said by our life was most important—the comforts of life or the will of God? The true spirit of the prayer is seen when we say, "That thy will may be done on earth, give us this day our daily bread."

By this prayer we declare our dependence upon God. Men are prone to say: "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" And when our granaries are full we cry: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." It is well for us to notice that brains and brute force

are not sufficient for the struggle of life. The world is God's arena. He is the author of all temporal as well as all spiritual gifts. The rich man says, "I have won all this." But fire, flood, tornado, or pestilence sweeps over his fields and leaves him a pauper.

It may be objected, "Why pray God to give it? Are we not to toil for it?" We are, and toil is a blessing. More are ruined in idleness and prosperity than in struggle and poverty. Further, we have no right to pray God to give it to us until we have used our best endeavors to earn it.

We profess our willingness so to win it. "Our daily bread." Washington Gladden has put this so strongly that we are his debtor. "Give us a chance to earn our daily bread by some kind of honest work. We are to eat our own bread. Bread that we beg, steal, cheat, or get by force is not ours." The only kind of help that does not pauperize a man is self-help. The honest man offers a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. He knows the pay is not his until he has earned it, and he will not cheat even to lessen the sweat of his

brow. No man can run a saloon, where men make profit out of the appetites and passions of their fellows, and preserve his self-respect. Every dollar that comes to his pocket has a curse upon it. He has rendered no service for it. He has only damaged the fame and the fortune of the man whose dollars he filched. The gambler takes from his victim that for which he rendered no equivalent, and enriches himself at the cost of another man's loss. Nor is he any better who gambles in the commodities that are necessary to human life, making a corner in wheat or grain and forcing the poor man to pay double for his loaf of bread. The great fortunes that are thus heaped up will weigh heavily on the soul of the wrong-doer in the day when God shall ask him, "Where is thy brother?"

It speaks of brotherhood. "Give *us.*" The capitalist is to offer that prayer and think of the poor man with five children and a sick wife. The striker is to offer that prayer and think of the man whom he keeps by threats from honest work. Wealth and labor were meant each to sup-

plement the other. Labor must hoist every sail which flecks the sea to satisfy our wants. From the corner-stone to the gilded pinnacle of our richest homes the stamp of toil is on every block. What stories could be told by the viands on your table if each could speak of the stages of its journey thither! Every zone is represented. And you share the result of the rich man's money and the poor man's toil. As you sit at your well-laden table to-day, meditate a moment upon the cost of its bounties, that you may better measure the thanks which are due to men of every clime. Your fish was taken at the risk of human life in the foggy seas off Newfoundland. Your coffee was picked by dusky half-clad toilers in Java and Borneo. Your tea came from the land of the Mongolian, your fruit from the vine-clad slopes of Spain or California or the banana plantations of Porto Rico. The hot breath of the African deserts stifled the men and the camels who toiled on to bring you spices, and men of wealth risked their argosies on every sea to bring all this to your doors. All these

and more were laid tributary that your wants might be met and your taste satisfied. The ends of the earth minister to the comfort of the humblest table in the land.

The greatest question this country has to settle is how to silence the cry of the oppressed and bring Plenty to reach her hand down to Want. The trusts we need are not gigantic combinations to make fictitious values—making the poor man poorer and the rich man richer—but the trust which honest help shall awaken in those in whose breasts the streams of confidence are dried and who are to-day nursing a mighty wrath. What will this country do when the famished multitude, fierce, unrestrained, and illiterate, "a Lazarus without a Gospel and without a God, shall turn, wolflike, in the blindness of its misery and the fierceness of its brute strength, on a Dives without conscience and without mercy?"

This is a prayer for the simplest necessities—"daily bread." Few would be content with Agur's prayer. More would say with John Quincy Adams:

"What first I want is daily bread, and canvasbacks, and wine
And all the realm of nature spread before me when I dine.
Four courses scarcely can provide my appetite to quell.
With four choice cooks from France besides to dress my dinner well."

If we could have the luxuries of life, most of us could get along without the necessities.

If we were to make a prayer in harmony with our wishes, it would not always be in such sober humble form. "Give us farms and houses and business property, increasing investments and assured incomes, finer teams, more beautiful pictures than our neighbors have." We want full barns and sure treasures that we might be exempt from the need of daily prayer and can say: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up and need not pray."

But it is written, "Give us *this* day." Are we not to desire something for the future? I think it is not wrong. We are taught to emulate the ant in its providence, but that is not in this prayer. Here we are taught how little we need. When

some one asked Socrates at the Fair of what he was thinking, he answered: "How many things there are which I do not need." "A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things he possesseth."

This prayer is a rebuke to the distrustful. The same God that helped us yesterday will be on hand to-morrow, and we shall not meantime have drifted beyond His loving care. Beat by beat the heart fulfils its mission; breath by breath the lungs bring life to the coursing blood; day by day our souls and bodies are kept in life by the good Father, who never forgets our needs and whose storehouse never is empty.

We are not to ask once and have done. We are to come every day as regularly as we rise to our toil. We are to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." That means: "Keep me from accident; help me to find an honest place to toil, and give me living wages for my toil; and if the hand is palsied, the feet impotent, the mills closed, the stores full, keep by Thy providence the wolf from the door, and

send some one who offers this prayer and who has bins full at home to answer his petition and mine for us."

This prayer elevates the common things of life to the dignity of concerns which interest the infinite God. It gives me courage to face the hard but uneventful round of daily life; to know that the promise, "Lo! I am with you always," does not end with the church or the prayer-room, but is true for the market, the kitchen and the store. The best of us see hours of discouragement. There are many before me who are wrestling hard with the awful problem of daily bread. If things go the best way possible there will be only enough for daily needs, and the thought, "What would happen if things do not go well?" makes us faint at heart. We have given hostages to fortune. Little children look to us for bread, and what will happen to them if we faint or fall? Have courage! God is interested in the battle we wage and will see us through.

No man can offer this prayer who means to eat another's bread got by force or fraud. It must palsy the lips of any

man who forgets his brother's need and piously says: "Be ye warmed and be ye fed," while he holds the key of his granary securely in his pocket. Has avarice ever tempted you? Has it quoted scripture, "He that careth not for his own is worse than an infidel?" I would rather take the chance at the judgment of the infidel whose hands have been open to the poor and whose gain has come by honest toil, than his place to whom the Master says: "I was hungry and ye fed me not; naked, and ye clothed me not!"

This prayer should teach us gratitude. "Where nothing is deserved, everything should be received with thanksgiving." Do you dare to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," and then as you sit about the table where your needs are satisfied, make no acknowledgment to the giver?

One prayer at least God has answered for you. He has given you daily bread. Oh, that He may satisfy as fully every need which this prayer touches! We reverse the Lord's petitions. Here it is one prayer for the body—for food convenient,

for fitting raiment, for ready shelter—and seven petitions for the soul. Do not forget the proportion. Seven for the soul and one for the body. Thy body goes not with thee far, but still you will need food for it. The supremest anxiety must be for the soul. You will not starve your body—let no starved soul stand over against you at the judgment day.

V

FORGIVENESS

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.—MATT. vi. 12.

WE are to consider the affairs of heart and soul. Our key-note is "forgive." As if the mind had turned upon itself in its asking and had said: "What have I with which to punctuate my petition—what to recommend me to the charity or fatherly kindness of the King?" As if a thought of self had frozen our petition upon our lips and the impotence of our purpose and the dread guilt of our acts forced us to have done with the meager matters of bread and shelter and to cry with mighty agony and strong yearning, as Solomon cried amid the glories of his temple: "Hear thou from thy dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive!"

1. "Forgive" is a new word in governmental affairs. It is not written in our statutes and pandects. It is true that ex-

ecutive clemency may shorten the sentence in a special case, but of forgiveness for the thousands justly condemned the law knows nothing. It sends the strong and helpless, the young and the old to the cell, to the chain-gang and to the gallows, without mercy and without remedy.

As with the law, so with nature. Science finds nothing which looks like forgiveness for transgression against natural laws. Cause and effect stand over against each other with no one to mediate between them. Our churchyards are filled with those who disregarded the laws of their being and perished. An endless procession walk our streets with labored steps and haggard faces, whose sin against the laws of health has found them out, and for whom neither doctor nor nurse can find a remedy and, least of all, forgiveness.

Our first question is, Should all men offer this prayer? Surely not—if the Pharisee is to be judged. For he prays: "I thank thee that I am not a transgressor as others are." It is the publican who prays: "God be merciful and forgive."

The moralist also stands with the Pharisee and asks: "Why should I seek forgiveness? What have I done to need it? I am not a thief, a blasphemer, a drunkard, or a murderer." With these stands the agnostic, a sneer upon his face: "Who is this God that I should worship Him? What is His power that I should supplicate His aid? By what authority does He claim to interfere with my freedom?" With these stand Mr. Feeble-Mind and Much-Afraid, who also ask: "What profit shall we have if we pray unto him?" Hence the moralist and the Pharisee, the agnostic and the indifferent, oppose us in the petition. All these men are sinners of the deepest dye and have supreme need to offer this prayer.

In the two accounts of this prayer, Matthew uses the word "debts," and Luke the word "trespasses," to indicate the nature of the sins which need the forgiveness of God. There are many who are doubtless honest when they say concerning the Ten Commandments: "All these have I kept from my youth up." They are not conscious of having commit-

ted any great sin, and object to being classed with those who trample under foot the Commandments of God and the laws of the State. But how about thy debts? "My debts? I pay them. No man can honestly say I owe him a cent. If I have taken anything wrongly from any man, I restore him fourfold. I pay everybody and mean everybody shall pay me."

How much owest thou unto my Lord? Let me call off the items. You were born in a Christian land and in a Christian home, and for that you are a debtor to God. You were surrounded with helpful influences from your cradle and kept alive by a love which never failed. You came into the world with a sound body and have been nourished into health. In your intellectual life you are the heir of all the ages. Others have sowed for you to reap, and they have toiled that you might be made rich. But all these lives were working out the purposes of God in your behalf, and you owe a debt to Him which is immeasurable. You have a wife whom you love—but a

good wife is from the Lord. You have little children—a loving Father's gift to you. For how much would you sell them and go out into the years, unloved and alone? The supreme treasure that comes from God to you is seen in the face of Jesus Christ, who loved you and gave Himself for you. It was He who gave life its new meaning, made possible the victory of faith, pushed back the narrow horizon of the old life, and gave you an outlook as limitless as eternity and unspeakably glorious.

If little is invested, a small return will show a good per cent.; but with millions invested, there must be great returns if there is to be satisfactory interest on the investment. What kind of an investment has God made in you? Has your return to Him been at all commensurate with the principal He has entrusted to you? Have you even kept up the interest? When a man owes you, what do you do with him? If it is a note of hand or a bill of goods, and he shows no disposition to pay, you will levy on his property. If you have a mortgage overdue, you foreclose and turn

the man out of house and home. In England, in former days, a debtor was sent to prison and awful indignities were put upon him. In olden times he was even delivered to the tormentors to be drawn and quartered and his wife and children were sold as slaves. All that for a debt of a few dollars!

Now, what is our debt to God? The Savior has indicated something of that when in His parable He shows us a man who owed $14,400,000 to his master and was mercifully treated, turning in rage upon a man who owed him $17. Ah! we are bankrupts without remedy, and the only prayer that fits our lips is "Forgive!"

Our debts represent the things which we have not done, the obligations we have never met, and these make us as guilty as overt acts. What I did, subtracted from what I ought to have done, leaves the sum of my awful debt. When we look at this side of the question, the Pharisee and the agnostic are dumb. Let me ask the moralist: "Who taught us to offer this prayer?" It was He who

knows human motives and human lives as no other can. It is a matter of universal experience that the better a man is, the more conscious he is of his failures. Only the Pharisee is good enough, and in the face of his self-righteousness the Savior utters words which hiss and sting: "How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?"

But we are not only debtors; we are also transgressors. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have all done knowingly and wilfully the things which were wicked, and there is no soundness in us. There is no person who ever lived except Jesus the Christ who did not need to offer this prayer. The saintliest souls of the ages must still sing,

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling!"

This prayer carries with it the confession of our sin, the acknowledgment of our debt and guilt. "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive." We are on our way to the judgment, and at a fearful pace. That fact is not only authorized by the word of God, but also by our own consciences. Foregleanings

of it fall daily across our paths. How will it fare with us if we deny our obligations to Him? If we despise the counsel of our Advocate, what will we do when He becomes the Judge?

In the story of the prodigal there are two words that arrest our attention. The first is the cry of selfish arrogance: "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." It is a protest against humility and restraint, the wilful utterance of the wayward. The second word comes after long years and many sorrows. It is the cry of a broken and a contrite heart. The wanderer has sounded the gamut of sin. He knows how awful it is to drag in the mire the pure love of his Father. He stands with bowed head at the gate from which he strode in pride. His coarse sack-cloth chafes the limbs, once clad in silk, but never in his life did he utter a word that went so swift to his Father's heart as this which he now utters: "Forgive, forgive!" It is the same word that the good Father would like to hear from every wanderer.

It is the only word that fits our case.

If sin is disease, we may talk of medicine; if it is weakness, the remedy is strength; if it is ignorance, we must seek wisdom; but if sin means guilt, nothing but forgiveness will set us right with God.

We have a right to pray for forgiveness through the sacrifice of Christ by whom God may be just, and yet the justifier of Him who believeth. Upon him the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all. We have then need to be forgiven, and if we confess our sin God will forgive.

2. Now we come to consider the measure of that forgiveness, "As we forgive our debtors." In Luke the form is: "For we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us." That is, we ask God what we already accord to those who have transgrest against us. We do not presume to come until we have done to others what we ask for ourselves.

This petition is the keystone of this prayer. He who can offer it will not have much trouble with the rest, but how many of us can offer it? We are not simply asking for forgiveness! we are asking for a particular kind of forgiveness. There

are men here who ask: "Does that mean just what it says? I am a poor man today because of another's rascality. Do you mean I am to forgive the man who has done all he could to ruin me; who planned in cold blood to accomplish my overthrow; who undertook the destruction of life itself with such diabolical forethought that even the breast of a fiend might be stirred with pity. Shall I forgive him—the man who tempted my boy to drink, the woman who led my daughter to her sin and shame? No, I can never forgive such terrible iniquity. If I must stop using this prayer, I will, but forgive I can not. I have no vindictiveness. I would not harm the sinner if I had the chance. Let God deal with him as he deserves. God's punishments will be severer than mine. I will leave all these in His hands." I answer these questions with another: "Is that the way you wish God to deal with you?"

Augustus Hare gives us the prayer of the "unforgiving man," and it carries its own lesson: "Deal with me, I beseech Thee, even as I deal with my neighbor.

He has not offended me one-hundredth part as much as I have offended Thee, nor been one-hundredth part as ungrateful to me as I have been to Thee. I remember and treasure up every little trifle which shows how ill he has behaved to me. Deal with me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, as I deal with him!"

In our pride we say we want justice, but that is the last thing that any of us can crave. If we had justice done us, we should be cut off as cumberers of the ground. What we want is mercy.

> "My last great want absorbing all
> Is, when beneath the sod,
> And summoned to my final call,
> The mercy of my God."

Wordsworth had in him the spirit of our prayer when he cried:

> "The best of what we do and are
> Just God forgive."

The comment of the Savior on this part of the prayer, which is the only part commented on, leaves no doubt as to what it means: "For if you forgive men their

trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses." Well, you say by a stretch of good nature, I can forgive but I can never forget. How would it seem to you if, when you came to your earthly father, repentant for your wrongdoing, he should answer you: "Well, I forgive you. I will not inflict the punishment I had intended, but every time I see you I shall think, 'That is the son who transgrest against me and brought sorrow and trouble into my life.'" Would that be forgiveness to you? Nothing short of annihilation of your sin will satisfy. "I will remember them against you no more forever." However great their transgression against you, yours against God has been greater. How exacting God is at this point! "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." There are some of us who say: "I would be willing to go half way, if the one who had wronged me

would do as much." To that we answer: "The language of mercy is not, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." That is the voice of the law. The voice of the Gospel is: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink." What would be our condition if God had acted as we act? We say: "I have forgiven once, but I can not do it again. Over against that stands the 'seventy times seven' of the Master."

It is not simply because we show an incapacity for anger that God promises to forgive us. It is because to harbor a wrong, nursing it by daylight and dark, is contrary to the spirit which must ever characterize true prayer. Revenge is a sword which wounds worse at the hilt than at the blade.

> "Revenge, at first tho sweet,
> Bitter ere long back on itself recoils."

How frequently we see the effect of harboring a wrong. Two Christian men become enemies. Each nurses his wrath, speaks evil of the other, will not tolerate his presence, can hardly endure to sit in

the same church with him, will not speak. All that, bad as it is, is but a small part of the damage done. The voices once heard in song and prayer and testimony are silent now. The happy expression is gone from the face, there is a vindictive ring in every word, and every line of the face tells of the hate which is tugging at his heart.

In one of my early pastorates were two men who had been fond of each other, but who came, through misunderstanding, to be bitter enemies. They moved to opposite sides of the church. When any sin was condemned from the pulpit, each glared at the other as if he would say: "The minister means you; take it; you deserve it." As the years passed, the bitterness deepened. The community took sides, the church was rent, and every good cause suffered. At length one of these men went up to his chamber for the last time. With death in sight he had a chance for sober thought. When his pastor called, he sent a message to his old enemy to come and see him. His enemy refused at first, but when he knew that

death was in sight he yielded. The pastor led him to the sick man's room and left them. What a contrast they made! One six feet and more in height; the other propt up by a pillow in his bed, as helpless as a child. The sick man stretched out his hands toward his enemy and said: "I couldn't die until I told you that our trouble was all my fault and asked you to forgive me. There is no excuse for me. I was mean and false and I have suffered unspeakable agonies all these years. Can you——" but he never finished the sentence, for the stout man cried out: "No! No! It was I! I began it and I have wronged you and hurt the Church and offended God by my wicked will." And the strong man bent to his bedside, drew the sick man's head gently over to his own breast and kissed him. So they ended their feud, but they could not undo the harm which twenty years of hate had wrought.

Whoso harbors his hatred can not pray, for it is written: "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer." The apostle shows us the reason and measure of our forgiveness: "Be ye kind one to another,

tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The man who is unforgiving pronounces a curse upon himself every time he prays. He solemnly asks God never to forgive him "either in this life or in the life which is to come." Dare you do that? But you say with Jonah: "I do well to be angry." This man has done wrong. There is a wide difference between the hatred of sin and the hatred of sinner. Whom do you benefit? Would you not save your enemy from death? Make him your friend. How you would hate yourself if you stood this hour looking down on the cold dead face of your enemy! Thank God that he is not dead, and go out of this house to be reconciled to him; and if he will not let you do that, commend him to the mercy of God with all kindness and pray honestly: "May God forgive me as fully as I forgive thee!"

In "Measure for Measure" Shakespeare puts into the lips of his heroine words that ought never to be absent from our hearts:

"Alas! Alas!
Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
And he that might the 'vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that
And mercy then will breathe within your lips
Like man new made."

Life is too short for malice. We have enemies, but they are our passions and lusts and not our brethren. The reaper is flashing his sickle; the grain and the flowers are falling. The gates of the city of the dead stand wide and narrow houses are in building there each day. Your name will soon be gone from your door and be carved upon your tomb. Do not try to live on your slights and injuries. They will be apples of Sodom. Let the cool streams of forgiveness come down from the hills of God and make your life, which is now scorching under the siroccos of passion, to blossom as the rose. Go into your closet until the bitterness has gone from your soul and the sting from your lips, and live henceforth so that men on earth and angels in heaven can say of you: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!"

VI

TEMPTATION AND DELIVERANCE

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.—MATT. vi. 13.

A LITTLE while ago we cried unto God in our need: "Give us this day our daily bread!" Then we made acknowledgment of our sins and prayed "forgive"; now we confess our weakness and ask for help. It is the cry of one who has come forth from prison and who says: "Let me never again know the power of its bolts and chains." It is the voice of a returning prodigal who has already asked for forgiveness; who feels about him the tender arms of love; who looks through tears upon the royal robe that takes the place of his rags, upon the ring upon his thorn-pierced hand; who knows the happiness of his father's kiss, but who buries his face in the bosom where he has found his rest, and says: "Don't take your arms from my neck; don't cease to

whisper your love in my ear. The husks and the swine and the desert still haunt me like a hideous nightmare. Bind me by the cords of love that I may never know them again. Let me not walk in the way of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful, lest I wake at last to find myself again in bondage!" It is the cry of one who realized the sinfulness of sin as well as the bitterness of its wages. Happy the prodigal who knows his weakness and goes not from his father's side! Sirens are on every hand, and they sing sweet songs. They sit by every reef to lure the sailor to his death, and the whitening bones of the shipwrecked, among which they sit, tell all too well of the ruin they have wrought. Let every mariner who sails amid false lights and siren songs pray to God for a surer light and a diviner song.

"Lead us not into temptation!"

It is written, "God can not be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man." Where lies the harmony between this statement and our prayer? In the majority of instances this word "tempt" means

"try" or "prove." So James says in the chapter from which we have just read: "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Such testing as this we should not shun. We should not ask never to have anything to try us, for in no other way can we develop a true and strong character. So found Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, Paul, and the choicest spirits we have ever known. But we do pray in harmony with His promise that we shall not "be tempted above that we are able to bear." There is a point at which our weak heart succumbs. We pray that the burden put upon us may not bring us to that point. We do not love the trying, and we pray God not to cut too deep nor to leave us too long under the tribulum. How often we have boasted of our strength! We have looked upon sinning men as beyond all sympathy. We have slept the careless sleep of self-confidence without guard or fortress. We awoke to find our enemy upon us and ourselves prisoners. So we come to find through bondage that our enemy treads

forever upon our heels, and if we dare to sleep we shall be aroused by the cry: "The Philistines be upon thee!" We have come from our contest victorious, but we do not come without trembling. The battle was too close. There are the vacant places in our ranks of some who fell. We were near enough to look into the pit and to hear the groans of those who were taken captives. We saw the consummate ingenuity by which men are flanked and overcome, and our wonder is not that anybody is captured but that anybody escapes. If Jesus needed the ministry of angels when His temptations were over, we need to cry when we see the clouds crowding the skies: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee!" "Take not thy loving kindness from me!" "Leave me not, neither forsake me!" "Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of thy wings!"

We have universal need to offer this petition. At what sad cost we have learned this! We have boasted: "Tho all men should forsake Thee, yet will not we." But in spite of our boast we have

slept while He suffered. We have denied Him by our lives, and in the time of His trial we have forsaken or followed Him afar off.

If the Master should stand here and, with tears in His voice, should say to this company of disciples: "One of you shall betray me," what would our answer be? Would we answer: "Yes, I know the man. He sits just over there. I wouldn't expect anything better of him." That is the answer of the self-confident Pharisee, not the humble Christian.

When the Master looked upon the twelve, John did not charge Peter, James did not charge Thomas; but each turned from the other to his Master and said: "Lord, is it I?" When we realize our own weakness—that is our fitting prayer. Perhaps this week some business man will forge or deal falsely. Some man, long trusted, will appropriate the wealth which is another's, will cheat some orphan or widow; some young man will yield to his appetite or passion; some young woman will take the first step out of the path of rectitude. You talk about

ordinary duties and ordinary days, but oh, God! these things are happening about us every day. Help us! You answer: "I could never forget." You do not know what you would do if you had this temptation. If you were on the verge of bankruptcy and the devil should whisper in your ear: "Just put that man's name on that note for sixty days; when it comes due, you will be able to meet it," God only knows what you would do. But in view of that hour the only thing for you to do now is to pray, "Lead me not into temptation!"

The temptations which come to us may be classed as those of the world, the flesh, and the devil. How worldliness interferes with other-worldliness! We are surrounded by the things which are seen. They assume an importance which is not really theirs. They dominate and allure us. They present fictitious values and keep us from the choice of the noble and eternal things.

We pay the price which the world asks for its riches, and little enough we get in return.

Do we not need to pray in the midst of commercialism and all that it stands for, "Lead us not into temptation?"

Perhaps no temptations appear so plainly and are so condemned as those of the flesh. Men yield to appetite and show us the awful results of intemperance and gluttony. Or they yield to the lust which sweeps down upon them in a tempest of passion, and they bring shame to those who love them and ruin to others who share their guilt. We can not be too careful in watching against the lions of appetite and passion which crouch for us at every turn in life's way.

But there is another class of sins which the Savior reprobated more than any other, and these are the sins of pride, and cruelty, and selfishness, and hate. Men practise these and still move in good society. They would turn away from the drunkard and the impure, but Jesus said theirs was the greater condemnation. For the sins against social law there was mercy and forgiveness, but for the Pharisee and the oppressor there was eternal condemnation. He said it was easier for

a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich and selfish to enter heaven. Publicans and harlots were more likely candidates for God's grace than they. Are we careful enough to pray, in the face of pride and selfishness, "Lead us not into temptation?"

Again, we utter these words as a plea that we may be so fortified that the events of life may not become to us temptations. It is certainly true that the same thing may prove a blessing to one and a curse to another. The death of a child, the loss of property, has made one man think of another land and set him to laying up treasure in heaven, while it has led another man to his cups and to the lowest hell.

We pray God to direct the currents of our lives that we may not be overcome by the obstacles that confront us; that we may be life-giving streams and not stagnant pools. We pray, "Lead us not into temptation!" Will it answer, think you, to offer that prayer and at the same time indulge in those things and associate with those persons who are a constant

temptation and menace to our spiritual life? In no part of this prayer is it more necessary for us to cooperate with God in the answer to our petitions than in this. If our attitude is such as says to our children: "I will go in the way of temptations and risk it; I will do the things that will help me to gain in this world, and do it tho I risk eternal life," it is an awful mockery for us to utter this petition. How many of us are conducting our business life in such a way that every day we are likely to be overwhelmed by our temptations? How many of us are giving ourselves to such society concerns that, if we escape from them uncontaminated, it will be a marvel? Well says Washington Gladden: "Many a man prays at the family altar, 'Lead us not into temptation!' and then rises from his knees, packs his movables and goes, with his family, where Lot went—straight to Sodom."

We do well to pray, "Make my spiritual strength so great and me so pure that the evil things which surround me may find no ally in my own soul. Make me

like Jesus, so that when the enemy comes he shall find nothing in me!"

"But deliver us from evil!"

Some would read this, "Deliver us from the Evil One," but Tholuck shows the reasonableness of the more comprehensive word. To speak this with the first part of the sentence gives us a fitting commentary upon it. Our text is not two prayers, but one. But there is a sense in which this last clause should be considered alone. The one sad, monotonous cry of the world is: "Deliver us from evil," and that last word has to men a varied translation. To one it means relief from impending financial ruin. In his agony, when friends have failed, when forethought has not availed, and every plan has been thwarted, he cries like a man at his wit's end: "Deliver me!" It is the cry which comes from the sick chamber, heavy with groans, when doctors are shaking their heads and friends are wringing their hands. It is the cry which the waves give back with hoarse echo as they beat ceaselessly against the cliffs, ready to furnish shroud and coffin

and sepulcher for the poor sailor who clings to the slippery mast. It is the voice which fills the hovel where Want keeps guard at the door while Starvation brings out its victim. From the room where the mother kneels to pray for the boy or girl whose sin has found them out; from the chamber where the sensitive spirit recoils from a public shame; from the houses which are peopled with fantoms, ugly and awful; from every lone heart which has lost its way in the maze—comes the cry, as sharp and agonizing as trouble can make it, "Deliver us from evil!"

But there is a deeper cry for help than any I have yet uttered. It is a cry for a physician who can "minister to a mind diseased"; for a power that can take the sting out of death and change defeat into eternal victory. "The evil that I would not, that I do." "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" is the bitter cry of hearts that fail. What is pain and bankruptcy and shame for a night, when the heavens are kindling with the wrath of God?

For food and raiment and friends and

power it may go well or ill; it matters little. "I shall one day shake them off as a tree casts her leaves." But I have a conscience which will forever keep me company. I am going to my grave, but I am going through it. What after death for me remains? "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him."

> "But can I bear the piercing thought,
> What if my name should be left out
> When Thou for them shall call?"

Let sorrow and sickness shake the tenement into ruin, but let the tenant escape unharmed! Let me look for joy in His unending day!

Is there any power that can bring the deliverance I need, and if so, when and how?

It must be something which goes deep, for my malady is of long standing. I can not be cured with rose-leaf and lotion. The fruits of my life have been evil and bitter. Do not mock me by tying on my boughs some graft of ethics or philosophy. Do not talk of enriching the soil or enclosing the tree more beautifully. The ax of Divine Justice is near its root, and

I fear the Master is about to say: "Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground?" Can you change me root and branch? If not, do not mock me. It must be something that shall make me hate the causes of iniquity, as well as the consequences. It must be something that can kindle a blaze in the darkness, for my lamp has gone out. It must be able to speak a resurrection, for my soul is sick unto death.

Is it so, my brother? Say you, like Bartimeus: "Lord, that I may receive my sight?" Right glad am I that I pass this way. You have tried earthly philosophies and suffered many things of many physicians. I will not send you back to them.

How began our prayer? Have you forgotten? "Our Father!" What a blessed sound that word has! Was it not Jesus who turned his face to the world after a life of ceaseless service and of sacrifice to say: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father?" Surely he will answer the faintest cry of the one whom He died to save. Do we place the Father in heaven? Jesus is also there at His right hand, and

ever liveth to make intercession for us. Hope thou, my soul! Thy prayer shall be answered. The Ethiope can not change his skin, but love can change his heart; and my sins which are many can be forgiven, and I may walk unharmed where wolves rave and the thoughtless fall. Even I shall be able to say: "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Not only shall a wicked past be blotted out, but a wicked nature shall be changed, and the unholy things which once I loved I shall hate forever.

This prayer will be answered, for He who inspired it hath all power. He stooped from the throne of His glory and with a nail from His cross hath written the petition which He presents to the Father on parchment purified in His blood.

I saw in a friend's studio the famous picture, "The Rest in Egypt." It was night on the Lybian Desert. The stars were shining faintly through the darkness. Afar, the great pyramid of Cheops kept guard. Near at hand stood the silent Sphinx, her sightless eyes looking out over the shifting sands of the desert.

In her face no look of tenderness; in her stony heart no love. Not far from the pedestal on which she rests an oriental rug was spread, and on it lay a sleeping traveler. A low lamp sends up its little gleam and its long column of ascending smoke. In the dim light one may see the outline of the huge camel resting near the traveler's side. But on the top of the pedestal, reclining her head against the breast of the Sphinx, lay a woman in whose face and form were grace and dignity combined, and on whose white bosom a strange light seemed to play. At first I wondered at its meaning, but, as I came nearer to the picture, my wonder ceased. On that mother's breast lay the Child, which was born in Bethlehem. A sweet light flashed from His open eyes, the East seemed to catch the glow, and the stars flamed up with sudden glory. Slumber for Mary and Joseph in the sands under the shadow of the Sphinx, with a light which could do nothing more than reveal their loneliness. But in their midst there was the Light of the World, under whose glad rays the nations are yet to claim their destiny.

So it is to-day. Men set up a Sphinx which can not answer, and bow down to worship. They travel through the desert with camel and taper, and fall asleep. But for those who awaken there is a gleam in the sky—prophecy of the hour when the desert shall blossom as the rose. Let your little taper, kindled at a human flame, go out. It is sunrise! He comes with healing in His wings.

"He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity."

We give him challenge as He draws near. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" And we exult in the triumphant answer: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." We know Thou hast it in Thy heart to deliver us from evil, for Thou didst mount the cross for us; and we know that Thou art able, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen!